# CHRIST'S VALEDICTORY

MEDITATIONS ON THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER OF JOHN

ROBERT F. SAMPLE

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OR

## Meditations on the Fourteenth Chapter of John

BY

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NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

Publishers of Evangelical Literature

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TO MY SPIRITUAL CHILDREN
SCATTERED ABROAD
DEARLY BELOVED AND LONGED FOR
THESE MEDITATIONS ON THE WORDS OF JESUS
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR

# Preface

Among all the recorded utterances of Jesus there are none of deeper significance, in spirit more affectionate and in comfort more abounding, than those spoken by Him at the Last Supper. They constitute our Lord's valedictory to His immediate disciples, and to believers in all ages who wait for His second glorious Epiphany. This farewell address is an epitome of the gospel. It magnifies the Father's love, the efficacy of the cross, and the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. It meets every experience of Christians on their way to God. It sets forth the necessity of holy obedience, of faith and love, and patient waiting for Christ's return. It is so simple that little children can understand it; so profound that it taxes the mightiest intellects; so comprehensive that all the ages cannot exhaust its fullness. No wonder the place it occupies in the gospel of the beloved disciple is styled the Holy of Holies, and that believers young in piety and years, with aged saints listening for the sounding of Jesus' feet, and those in each intermediate stage of Christian progress, have devoutly turned to this parting message; and, as they devoutly meditated upon it, have found their joy

intensified, their love enkindled, their weakness supported, their sorrow relieved, and their hope inspired; both in the dark and cloudy day, and at the eventide of life.

May the prayerful study of these last words of Jesus be profitable to our souls; enlarging our spiritual being, increasing our efficiency in Christian service, and making us more heavenly-minded; thus preparing us for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

*New York.*

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# A MESSAGE TO THE TROUBLED

*Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*—JOHN xiv. 1.

*You never get to the end of Christ's words. There is something in them always behind. They pass into proverbs, they pass into laws, they pass into doctrines, they pass into consolations; but they never pass away, and after all the use that is made of them they are still not exhausted.*

—DEAN STANLEY.

# I

## A MESSAGE TO THE TROUBLED

CHRIST'S valedictory was spoken at a late hour on the night of the Passover. The religious solemnity in which the Jews were engaged, was the most impressive of all their holy feasts. It was a memorial of divine favor, of deliverance from evil, and a promise of good in years to come. Voices of cheer were heard on every side; and the whole life of Jerusalem seemed to pulsate with gladness. But there were other events transpiring which threw a heavy shadow over the scene, although it may not have disturbed the prevalent joy. Wicked men were plotting the death of Jesus; and a little group of Galileans, assembled in one of the rooms of the city, were disquieted and sad.

Christ's departure was at hand. Calvary, with all its tragic events, was only a little further on. The memorial supper, to be observed until the Lord's return, setting forth the manner and design of His death, was ended. The Hallel had been sung, the service of song thus sanctified by our Lord Himself, and the Master and His disciples were about to go out to the Mount of Olives. Then was spoken Christ's affectionate valedictory;

that portion of Evangelical history which may be appropriately styled the crown of all His teaching.

Special interest attaches to the last utterances of men, especially those of men who have been distinguished for worth and potential deeds. Their words have been caught in their passage, and stereotyped in the literature of the world and of the ages. But as Christ was preëminently great, and His work infinitely important, the significance of His parting message is lifted far above the level of human speech. As we read it, breathing forth an unexampled tenderness, expressing the greatest truths that ever engaged human thought, kindling a light to shine in every dark passage of Christian experience, putting the arms of everlasting strength underneath human weakness, drawing aside the veil which conceals the heavenly life, and inspiring a longing to go home to God; we unhesitatingly say, "Never man spake like this man." No wonder that Christians young and old, the happy and the sad, in high places and in low, often read this precious valedictory, always discovering in it something fresh and new, its fullness more inexhaustible than Jacob's Well, and its compass wider than the sea.

"Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." There is another rendering of the passage, the imperative being used in both clauses. "Believe in God, believe also in Me." This interpretation has large support; so also has the common version, which is to be pre-

ferred. The latter seems more in harmony with the state of mind which Christ addressed, and with the instruction that follows. The disciples, in common with the Jewish nation, were unqualified theists. They had not discovered the veiled glory of Christ's person and His oneness with the Father. There gathered a mystery about Him they could not penetrate. His works were a constant marvel. His words were matchless. His life was above the realm of men. He was greater than Moses. They thought Him a prophet sent from God, possessed also of regal prerogatives, and destined to restore the Kingdom to Israel. Their view of Him was far too low. They needed a wider horizon of truth. Hence Jesus said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Observe,

1. The disciples were troubled.

There seemed abundant reason for their state of mind. The darkness deepened with the advancing hours. Never had they known such a breaking up of all the foundations of hope. Faith trembled on the verge of exhaustion. They were like the Galilean Lake when the storm swept down from the cold summits of Mt. Hermon. They had just learned that Judas would betray the Master, that Peter would deny Him, and that Jesus would go away; and they, orphaned and disappointed, were to go out, as they supposed, on an unknown future without counsellor or guide, to suffer, and, perchance, soon to die.

Then, too, there was something in the manner of Christ, the expression of His countenance and the tones of His voice, which was an intimation of an indefinable and immeasurable sorrow about to come to Him; and, in some way, involving themselves. They had entered the evening twilight. They were sitting in the shadows of great events and could not tell what an hour might bring forth. Troubled! How could it be otherwise? Their sorrow so weighed on the sympathy of Christ that He quite forgot His own.

The remedy for this state of mind was faith. Hence after our Lord had addressed Peter, foreshadowing his great offence, there was a pause, solemn as eternity itself, until Jesus broke the silence by an extended valedictory.

2. The disciples needed an extension and increase of faith. "Believe also in Me." They believed in God. They believed in the Holy Spirit. They had long been familiar with the predictions concerning the Messiah. But they had misinterpreted prophecy. The light was dim, and objects were indistinct. They needed to know more; and, with growth in knowledge, would come an increase of faith. Jesus had provided for this. Pentecost was not far away. The eternal Spirit, who had been the source of all the spiritual life and power the chosen seed had ever known, was soon to widen the sphere and intensify the energy of His work. The disciples will then believe also in Christ. They

will learn much concerning His glory and grace, through the tutelage of the Spirit whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto His people.

It is not enough to believe in God. This was sufficient in an unfallen state to secure from trouble, but it cannot cure trouble. Martin Luther said, "An absolute God avails me nothing." Theism must be merged in Christianity. God must be manifested in Christ, or, as Bengel expresses it, "the ancient faith in God must be dyed with a new color, by their believing in Him who came from God." Apart from Jesus, in covenant relationship and in His incarnation, we find no comfort in the contemplation of God's majesty, holiness, and inflexible justice. Until we see Him in Christ, declaring His love to us by His unspeakable gift; in the humiliation, shame and death, for our sakes, of His only begotten Son; supporting Him in His conflict with death and hell; raising Him from the dead and enthroning Him on high; we cannot venture near His throne, nor can we find encouragement to lay our burdens at His feet.

God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. He is in Him, comforting us in every trial, supporting us under every cross, defending us from every foe, and making all His providences contribute to our present and eternal good. It is when God and His equal Son come unto us, and make their abode with us, and the Holy Spirit re-

veals both, that we are able to sing songs in the night, and, by faith, to bring much of heaven down to earth, to be enjoyed all along the homeward journey.

Let us observe here that Christ, throughout this entire address, constantly urges the necessity of faith in Himself. The comfort, usefulness, and final salvation of His followers, depend on their believing on Him as one with the Father, and as the only sufficient Saviour from sin and guilt and fear. At length He has accomplished His immediate purpose. They believe. Then He ceases to speak, closes His discourse with prayer, and they go out to the Mount of Olives.

And as we study the life of the disciples after Christ's ascension, we are impressed with their unwavering faith in Him. They even rejoiced in tribulation. They were persuaded that their afflictions would issue in glory. It mattered nothing to them whether the way was smooth or rough, whether the days were bright or dark, whether they came to honor or were cast out by men; they trusted in their wise leader, and, with their hands in His, went joyfully wherever He led, waiting for the glad coronation day.

But these words of Christ are addressed to us, as certainly as they were to His immediate disciples. His omniscience embraced us while He was in that upper room, while among the shadows of Gethsemane, on the cross, and in the cloud-chariot

which carried Him above, where, still remembering Calvary, He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

The Christian life is one of habitual peacefulness; yet we are often troubled. There are constitutional states, and spiritual conditions, and social environments, which modify religious experience; but there is no absolute exemption from trouble. The way to heaven leads through the Red Sea and the Wilderness. The way that all the generations of the saints have trod, is the path over which we are now going.

The conflicts of the Christian life often depress us. There are two contending principles within us, each striving for the mastery. The soul is a silent battlefield, where armies march and countermarch and resist each other. This inward struggle may write its history on our persons, look out through our eyes, reveal itself in the tones of our voices, and in the words we speak. There may be experiences which are known only unto God and ourselves, which weigh down our hearts, dig channels on our faces for tears, and sometimes lead us to the very borders of despair.

It is to this experience that Paul refers when he speaks of the law in the members warring against the law in the mind, and in the thickest of the conflict exclaims, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver from the body of this death?" He was reminded of the custom of certain tyrants

who bound a dead body to the living prisoner, and compelled him to live in that loathsome presence. We know what this means. This is the Valley of Humiliation, and Apollyon is our foe. Weary and wounded, we are sore distressed. Even if, through grace, we have been enabled to resist every temptation to sin; yet the suggestions of evil disturb us, and we are quite sure to hold ourselves responsible for them, thus inducing a painful and unwarranted sense of guilt.

Meanwhile we are disturbed by the evidences of remaining sin. It is possible for a perfectly holy being to be tempted. We are reminded of Christ's wilderness experience. But we discover a tendency in ourselves to respond to the appeals of sin. We are often exhausted by the resistance to temptation, sorely needing the ministrations of grace to uphold us. The view we obtain of our hearts is humbling and sad.

Then there come the hidings of God's face. We have been off our guard, and temptations have overcome us. We spake unadvisedly with our lips. Some sinful passion gained the mastery. Some act, which gave the world occasion to blaspheme, and well-nigh destroyed our usefulness, left its slime upon us. The first result may have been obduracy and impenitence. Like Peter, we repeated our denial of the Lord. Then all was dark, for God was gone. Communion with Him was a memory only. The spirit, if not the language, of

prayer had departed. The light faded away; peace and hope had well-nigh fled. Ah, who can fathom the bitterness of such experience? It is more to be feared than death itself. It is of the nature of eternal torment. We do not realize that it is only for a little moment that God has forsaken us.

Then there are experiences that are less painful, that may still suffice to cloud our spirits. They are the disappointments of life, the defeat of cherished plans, the loss of worldly possessions, the unredeemed promises of some one on whom we had leaned, perhaps the breaking of the marriage vow and the sudden termination of domestic happiness, every human prospect wrapt in gloom, and the gardens our fancy had created, turned into locust-blackened wildernesses. Or bereavements crowd upon us. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and Benjamin carries a hectic flush which forebodes an early death. Or we are disturbed by the thought of our own departure. We shrink from the last struggle, the darkness and corruption of the grave, and the solemn issues of an approaching judgment.

Now let us listen to the words of Jesus, who enters the inmost chamber of our grief, and, in a tenderness peculiar to Himself says, "Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." There is no sorrow He cannot alleviate and ultimately heal. If we will but come into right relations to Him; sin rejected and holiness

sought, our hearts fully set within us to do His will, at any cost; then He will grant us the abundant consolations of His grace, and give us garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Jesus will sustain us in the conflict with tempters and temptations, and assure us of a triumph over both. He will subdue the sin within us; helping us day by day to rise above its control, and making us increasingly like to Himself. He will dissipate the clouds that shut out the view of our Heavenly Father's face; tell us of the grace that multiplies pardon; relieve the doubt which a struggling faith resisted, and grant us visions of heaven. He will make all our disappointments, failures, bereavements and fears, the stepping-stones of a joyful ascent.

Only believe Him, beloved, and faith will shorten the night, and cover the firmament, meanwhile, with stars. Your vision shall look beyond all visible worlds, and contemplate heaven with its glories and joys; and the afflictions of this life shall sink into nothingness as compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Let not your heart be troubled. Believe the promises Christ has left you. Expect great things, and urge your way toward them. Believe in His presence, and enter into it, for has He not said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"? Go trustfully out on the unknown future remembering His word, "I will guide thee with Mine eye."

"The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void and find
The Rock beneath."

A German picture represents a child walking calmly along the edge of a precipice, and you wonder at the representation of composure on the beautiful face until you see the outline of an angel hovering above, its hands on the shoulders of the child, guiding it safely on. Jesus is greater than the chief of angels; more thoughtful, more sympathetic, mightier than Gabriel; and He will never desert you. None shall ever pluck you out of His hands. Not one of all His people, even the least deserving, shall fail to enter His heaven and share His glory world without end.

From all this we learn

1. The sympathy of Christ.

Remember that these appropriate words were spoken by our Lord the same night on which He was betrayed. It may seem strange to us that His mind was not wholly absorbed by suggestions of His approaching death. Could His disciples have reproached Him if He had retreated into the sanctuary of His great sorrow and closed the door behind Him, there girding Himself for the death to be endured for their sakes? But Jesus' sympathy, like His nature, knew no bounds. Wherever there was pain or sorrow, thither it went; calming and soothing the troubled soul. His sympathy took Him to Jairus' home, where mourners wept for the ruler's

daughter; to the gate of Nain, as the funeral procession came out; to Bethany, when Lazarus was dead. So His sympathy embraced the sorrowing disciples, and He was intent on comforting them.

This sympathy of Christ finds expression in every age, and extends to all the experiences of trial. He enters into our temptations, conflicts, bereavements, and urgent wants. His heart touches our hearts. His left hand is under our head, and His right hand embraces us. He bends over our beds of pain, and, with His lips close to our ears, that we may not fail to hear, He bids us trust in Him and be at rest. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Touch the sensitive plant, never so gently, and at once the leaves fold themselves together, each one helping to shelter all the rest from harm. So if any trouble comes to you, believer, Christ's sympathy hides you away in the shelter of His bosom. Titian, the Roman Emperor, rent his garments that he might stanch the wounds of his soldiers; but Christ rends His flesh that He may heal ours. He pours His sympathy into our tempest-tossed souls, calming them as His word, "Peace, be still," quieted the stormy Galilean Lake. Believe it, and open your hearts that He may enter. Do not attempt to carry your trouble alone. Do not brood over it, and nurse it, dwelling continually in the tombs; but permit Jesus to overlay it with the palm

of His compassion, and to let fall upon it the light of the approaching heaven.

2. Let us cultivate Christian sympathy. Sympathy is Christlike. In its exercise we walk over paths familiar to Him whose sacred footprints marked the way to heaven. Nothing that we can do will so lighten our burdens, as to share the burdens of others. John Howard pronounced compassionate ministry the best remedy for a heavy heart. It brings down a segment of heaven into the troubled sea of our own lives; a quiet resting-place, undisturbed by fear, when oceans roar and mountains shake.

But we are not like Christ, who fed the hungry in the wilderness, if we can enjoy our feasts while hunger lies on the doorstep; or the voices of music, when the plaint of sorrow is on the air; or our health, when our neighbor is racked with pain; unless we have first ministered to the famishing, and sought to comfort the sad, and watched awhile with the sufferer, pointing to the land where suffering is unknown. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Secker has well said, "It should be among Christians, as among lute strings; when one is touched the others tremble."

"Speak gently—'tis a little thing
Dropped in the heart's deep well;
The good, the joy that it may bring
Eternity shall tell."

MANY MANSIONS

*In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.* —JOHN xiv. 2.

*Very often when the eyes are closing in death, and this world is shutting off the light from the departing soul, the last wish which is made audible is "to go home." The words break out sometimes through the cloud of delirium; but it is the soul's deepest and most central want, groping after its object, haply soon to find it as the clogs of earth clear away, and she springs upon the line of swift affection, as the bee with unerring precision shoots through the dusk of evening to her cell.*—REV. E. SEARS, D. D.

## II

## MANY MANSIONS

JESUS had gently rebuked the sorrow of His disciples. They were greatly troubled, and thought they had reason to be. The Master was soon to go away. All that they had cherished and hoped for, was departing as the light when the sun is setting. It would be possible to bear the grief which endures but for a night; but, so far as they can see, there is no prospect of a morning. No kindlings of light along the hills foretell another and better day. They discern the dim outlines of a cross, but see no empty sepulchre beyond it; a Messiah crowned with thorns, but no royal diadem displacing the symbol of shame; a little church crushed under the heel of the Sanhedrim, and thrust through with Roman spears, but no glorious triumph, and world-wide victory, no spiritual kingdom which shall outlive the throne and dominion of the Cæsars.

Shortsighted disciples! Slow of heart to believe! But to reproach them is to pronounce our own condemnation. Christ compassionates them. He seeks to lighten their burden, and adapts His message to their need. True, He is about to go

away. The shifting home of which He was the head, is soon to be broken up. But to them the outlook would not be dark if they would only believe in Him. Then, without any promises added to promises already given, they would meet the gathering storm without fear, and expect that He who made the worlds, and filled the universal throne, would bring light out of darkness, life out of death, and incomparable glory as a recompense for present suffering.

"In My Father's House are many mansions." These words suggest, 1. The homefulness of heaven.

Our dwelling shall be in our Father's House. All the occupants will be brethren. There will exist all the offices of friendliness, the fullness of affection, the community of interest, and the permanence of relationship, necessary to constitute heaven a home.

There is no other description of the heavenly life that so accords with our soul's yearnings, and promises to supply so fully our profoundest need, as that which represents its homefulness. This feature is the perfection of the earthly life, the summit of human bliss. Home is the place where no disguise is worn, no deception practiced, no enmity cherished. Here hearts are sure of each other. Confidence is neither restrained nor abused. Sorrow is shared, burdens distributed, joys multiplied.

When in a foreign country, we count over the days that separate us from home, and the lessening number increases our pleasure. We may enjoy historic scenes, majestic mountains, and beautiful valleys; Damascus, Mount Lebanon, the exquisite Chamouni, through which flows the Arve; but our hearts long for home, and Sandy Hook is far more to us than the Bay of Naples, for it welcomes us to our native shore. The feeling is natural. The sentiment is elevating. There is something, and there may be much, of heaven in it. We have gone down in every attribute of manhood, and departed from the source of the purest earthly delight, if we prefer the Club Room to the family hearth, with its holier cheer; as, in a period of social degeneracy in England, many who held places of power spent their evenings at the Grecian or the Rainbow, rather than in the homes on Fleet Street or Chancery Lane.

Our divine Lord loved His home in Nazareth, and there nearly all His life was spent; and when the necessities of His high office took Him to Jerusalem, He found and enjoyed, for its helpfulness and love, another home in Bethany. When He left this world He did not take His departure from the steps of Antonia's Castle, or from the seats of fashionable pleasure in King Herod's city, but from the hillside which looked down on the village of Martha, her sister and Lazarus; and the last object that engaged His attention, when about to go away,

was the earthly home that had sheltered Him from harm and girdled Him with love. The homefulness of heaven attracts us. It promises rest, helpful ministries, sweet communings, and sanctified affection which shall never falter nor fail.

2. The next characteristic of heaven which deserves special mention is,—Its permanence,—

"In My Father's house are many mansions." The original carries the idea of stability, and might be rendered, "abiding-places." The fashion of this world passeth away. Change and decay, wasting and destruction, follow each other in rapid succession.

When a noted conqueror, after a series of brilliant victories, entered his own city, amid the shouts of his admiring people, he was asked what was needed to perfect his happiness. He answered by one significant word—"Continuance." Here our homes are transient. They are like the patriarch's shifting tent. Scenes we love are left behind us. Relationships we cherish come to an end. The law of primogeniture was partly born of a desire for continuance. It would at least perpetuate the family name in connection with the home; and the ancestral mansion, rather than a mausoleum, would preserve the memory of them who are gone.

It was this sentiment that prompted Warren Hastings, during all the years he ruled the millions of India, to husband his earnings that he might buy back the home of his fathers; and the hap-

piest day in his long, eventful life was that on which he returned to Daylesford as the proprietor of the paternal mansion and its contiguous grounds. When you looked on a castellated dwelling, perchance not many miles from the Clyde, the home of your ancestors for centuries past, impressive in its antiquity, and homeful in its appointments, notwithstanding the changes it has seen, it suggested a pleasant contrast with the perishable dwellings of our day, or those far down the city avenue where continuance is only a span. You may think this sentiment merely. So let it be. But, when I carry my love of home across the dividing line of life, I am thankful for the words of Jesus, "In My Father's house are many abiding-places." On lintel and door-post is written, "There shall be no more going out."

3. The capacity of heaven is suggested by the "many mansions."

It is supposed, by some, that there is a central world, in the depths of space, of such vast dimensions that suns are less than star-dust in comparison. Only such a world, exceeding all our conceptions of it, can possess the power, under natural law, to hold all other worlds to their orbits, and maintain harmony among the innumerable spheres.

The disciples may have thought of heaven as a country limited as was their own. Canaan was among the smallest of all lands, a narrow strip of mountains and valleys, lying between the Jordan

and the Great Sea; Lebanon marking its northern boundary, and the desert its southern limit. And as the Hebrew's country was small, as compared with the Roman Empire, which reached from the Euphrates to the coast of Spain; so heaven might be, as related to the world they knew. This would seem to limit salvation to a single nation; and make heaven the abode of a chosen few. When these farewell words were spoken, the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles still remained, and the Great Commission to disciple all nations had not yet been given. But Christ intimates a wideness in God's mercy they had not discovered; a multitude of redeemed that their horizon had not included.

Many Mansions! Room enough for all the race; for generations yet unborn; for all the ages until the end of time; however remote that end may be. Room enough for the angels that have retained their first estate, and for all orders of beings that have never known the curse of sin, or shall yet be rescued from its power. Hence the fullness of the gospel; the compass of invitation and promise, wide as the earth and long as the ages; the call that comes from the boarder of the King's Country to which the King has returned, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

4. The diversity of heaven.

Its mansions are suited to the different characters and capacities of their occupants; and new forms

of beauty are continually appearing. Variety prevails in grace as in nature. The world is not a dead level. There are mountains and valleys, broad rivers and streams, lofty oaks and trailing vines. Thus a pleasing variety exists, and we admire an Alpine range the more because of the fragrant meadows at its base, through which the brooks wind, and sing. So there will be distinctions in the world above.

Some mansions will be more conspicuous than others; and some will stand nearer the throne. Some may suggest, by their form and appointments, that they are occupied by prophets, others by apostles, others by martyrs; these by men and women who laid the foundations of the Church in heathen lands, and those by a humble ministry in the world's seclusions; these by believers who excelled in benevolence, whose earthly monuments were great charities, whose ministrations were a solace to grief, whose words were benedictions to the weary and discouraged; those by the gifted and great who represented thousands; their names known and their influence felt the world around; and yonder mansions by saints whose piety was lowly, patient and enduring; revealing kinship to the Galilean.

Our Saviour intimates grades in glory. Some shall rule over ten cities, others over five. Some shall shine as the firmament, others as the stars forever and ever. Meanwhile each shall go to his

own country. Kindred spirits here shall find congenial spirits there. Groups of friendship below may be continued above. Households bound by ties of sacred kinship on earth, may dwell in close proximity in heaven; earthly relationships, though not all, continually embracing new, inspiring elements, may perpetuate essential features of that which made and blessed the life below. Kindred and tribes and tongues may have their allotments which shall preserve history and magnify the grace that saved them. Individuality will not be merged in the general mass, nor peculiarities fade out on the threshold of bliss. There shall be diversities of place and service, of power, possibilities, and glory. "In My Father's house are many mansions."

5. The unity of heaven.

"In My Father's House." Hearts shall be in unison. Lives shall blend. Harsh distinctions shall be unknown. Luther and Zwingli shall see eye to eye. Calvin and Arminius shall be in full accord. Separatists here, shall be brethren there. Churchmen and Dissenters shall forget their differences. Church polity, ceremonies, ordinances and modes of administration shall occasion no dispute; and whatever was divisive and of the earth earthy, shall go to its own place. The multitude of the redeemed shall be so great that only a celestial arithmetic can number it, and yet perfect harmony shall prevail; many as the waves and one as the sea; the unity the more blessed because of the

pleasing and endless diversities. As the sons of Jesse formed one family, a happy unit, although each differed from all the rest in mental characteristics and physical form, so we shall be one in spirit, affection, and loyalty to the Lord of all, when we shall gather in our Father's House, to stay home forever; misunderstandings, coldnesses, alienations, contentions, having departed as the night when the sun is risen.

6. The Certainty of this Consummation.

"If it were not so I would have told you."

We have a yearning for a better and endless life. We know that we have not attained our rest. The soul turns its face toward the future, and waits for the eternal day. Now and then, the anxious inquiry pierces the atmosphere of the world's darkness, "If a man die shall he live again?" Generations have been moving on in solemn procession to an invisible world; have entered it, and the doors have closed behind them. No voice breaks the stillness. None return to tell what is the state of the dead. We address our burdened cry to our departed Lord, "Is there life beyond?" Had He made no audible answer, even silence would have been a reply. "If it were not so I would have told you." If we had been pursuing shadows, our search vain, our expectation a delusion, the Master would have dispelled the deception. He could not have gained His own consent to see our feet groping their way to the gates of endless death, when we

had sought and hoped to reach realms of light and life. There is a home on high; a life beyond death; a house with many mansions. "If it were not so I would have told you."

Moreover, if Christ had not been all He claimed to be, and had not been able to do all He promised; if forgiveness had been a falsehood, heaven a dream, the grave our final goal; then God would have been constrained by His love of truth, even in the absence of any affection for us, to declare the Son of Mary a self-deceived teacher, or a willful impostor. His silence alone would have supported our belief in Christ. But to this He had added testimony the ages cannot disprove, when He spake saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." "If it were not so I would have told you." Now we are warranted to believe in Christ, because we are warranted to believe in God. If we have doubted, we should now rejoice with exceeding joy, as the prisoner who is set free, or the weary night sentinel when he sees the dawn breaking on the summit of the mountains. Frederick William III. lived in fear of losing his possessions because France threatened to wrest them from him. We should be happy in the assurance Christ has given us, that where He is we soon shall be, our inheritance as forfeitless as His throne is eternal.

7. Respecting the location of heaven, Christ gives us no information. If it had been any ad-

vantage to us to know He would doubtless have told us. The conjectures of men are numerous, and none of them answer the question—"Where is heaven?"

Some think our earth, after its renovation by fire, will be the future heaven. This opinion does not seem tenable. Eighteen hundred years ago Christ went to prepare a place for us; evidently a place distinct from our present abode, the heaven of all departed believers, to be ours when the earth shall burn, and these lower heavens shall have passed away. Others suppose it is in our own atmosphere, above the summits of the highest mountains; hence, above the clouds which gender storms and cast shadows. But this view is unsatisfying to most minds and seems unscriptural. When Christ left the world a cloud received Him from sight. His movement thereafter was, no doubt, swifter than the light which passes all visible worlds in an hour; and the world to which He went is evidently beyond the firmament of stars; for it is said to be "above all heavens."

Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and the statement implies a far remove from earth. Inasmuch as the passage is rapid as thought, distance practically ceases. The world where God's presence is most signally manifested, and where finite spirits, who are by the limitations of their nature confined to space, find a home; may be the central world, around which all systems of worlds revolve; the greatest and best, bearing the signa-

ture of God's perfect hand, from which the divine glory radiates along the endless lines which go out into all the universe of God.

But it matters not where heaven is. It is enough for us to know that it is where our Lord and all His ransomed are. Material splendors fade away in the presence of our Beloved. To see and be like Him, will be the consummation of Christian hope. All else will be an expression of His love, to be valued because of this; but, after all, we shall find our chief joy in His presence, and His person will be the magnet that will draw all the hosts of heaven around Him.

The future of the universe is concealed from us. It is growing old, and wearing out. Its impulse declines, slowly, it is true, but surely, as the ages pass away. Matter had a beginning; it may have an end. The spiritual power that created the world out of nothing,—that which is back of all, in all, and above all,—will survive the existing creations; and these may be followed by something higher, for God's works are ever on an ascending scale. Inspiration tells of "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Then the spiritual will occupy the throne, and the Apocalyptic vision become a reality. There is a depth of meaning in the word of Jesus which we shall be forever learning and never fathom; its preciousness and joy is as infinite as God: "That where I am there ye may be also."

Jesus has "gone to prepare a place for us." In virtue of His death, He secures the right to provide a residence for His people. Hence, having made Himself a sacrifice for sin, He went to present His blood in the holy place on high, as the sufficient ground of our acceptance with God; and, in the future office of His priesthood, to make intercession for His own. Thus He prepares the place for us, and us for it. Then, when all is in readiness, "He will come again, and receive us to Himself."

By His coming may be meant His gracious appearing at death, when He shall dispel all fear of the passage, support us in it, and introduce us to the eternal rest of heaven; or His second glorious coming may be intended, when His redemptive work shall be completed in the resurrection, and the last subject of His grace shall be gathered into the church below. Both interpretations may be admissible. Ever since our Lord returned to the Father, He has been coming to His people; coming that He may come; touching our lives and lifting them by His spiritual presence; by the power of the Holy Ghost; in the special manifestations of His grace; in potential providences; and in the solemn transition of worlds.

But the consummation of all His comings, will be His second glorious appearing in the clouds, without sin unto salvation, accompanied by innumerable angels; when the dead in Christ shall rise, and the living be changed, and all shall be

caught up into heaven, to be forever with the Lord. Of that day knoweth no man. It may be near. A clearer vision might discern the conqueror on the way. If our ears were not so dull of hearing, we might hear the sound of His chariot wheels, and catch the utterance of His heart's deepest yearning, saying to His church, "Arise My love, My fair one, and come away."

Holy Spirit prepare us for the longed-for advent! Then whether living, or in our graves, we shall lift up our heads with joy and say, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation," and then shall we haste away beyond these lower heavens, robed in immortality, singing hosannas as we go, our rejoicings joined with the welcome of the angels; and, when surrounded with the splendors of our Father's House, we shall raise the universal song of the redeemed; "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

*I am the way, the truth and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*—JOHN xiv. 6.

*Jesus is the way by His example; the truth by His word; and the life by His grace. The new and living way, wherein faith causes us to walk; the infallible truth of good things to come, for which we must hope; and the eternal life, which must be the sole object of our love. Out of this way, there is nothing but wandering; without this truth, nothing but error and deceit; and without this life, nothing but death.*—QUESNEL.

## III

## THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

Christ having announced that He was about to go away, assumed that His disciples knew to what place, and into what state, He was going. He had just intimated that He was soon to return to His Father; and had previously suggested that, having come down from heaven, the accomplishment of His earthly mission would be followed by His departure to the world from whence He came.

But the disciples failed to interpret His words. They still clung to their preconceptions of Him as a temporal prince, who had come to establish a temporal kingdom; bringing back to Israel its former preëminence and glory. They knew not by what means this end would be accomplished. They could not discern the path which led to it. Why should He say, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know"? Thomas, who seems to have been the dialectician in the college of disciples, suggested to the Master that, as they did not know where He was going, it would be impossible for them to know the way. The conclusion was a logical sequence. It had not occurred to them that defeat could be victory, and death the way to

the throne. The key to this mystery was not yet in their possession. God's thoughts were widely different from their thoughts, and His ways from their ways. Therefore Christ, bearing with their dullness, again tells them that He is going to the Father, and that He is the way, and the only way, by which lost men can return to God. "I am the way, the truth and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." This statement is very plain to us; but it was very dark to them. It needed the interpretation of history, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The Ascension opened heaven to their view, and Pentecost revealed Christ enthroned in glory. Then they understood that Christ's kingdom was spiritual, that its consummation would be realized in heaven, and that faith in the death accomplished on Calvary was the condition of salvation.

"The way, the truth and the life." In the soliloquies of Augustine, as Bengel has observed, these words are interpreted as meaning that Christ is the true way of life. While this is so, it is not all that the Master intended. There is a profound significance in each member of this sentence which is not expressed in the exegesis of the great theologian.

Christ is the way to life, and His truth reveals it; but let us dwell a little on the several statements of our Lord, which, if they are not set in direct apposition to the great facts of sin, righteousness and

judgment, readily suggest them, revealing the way out of sin, acceptance with God through His Son, and our open acknowledgment and acquittal at the last day; after which we shall enter into the joy of our Lord.

I. Christ is the way to the Father. This statement has many aspects, and expresses a universal fact.

1. We obtain a saving knowledge of God through His Son. We cannot comprehend an absolute God. By searching, we cannot find Him out. The sages of Greece, who thought mountain-summits lifted them into the closest fellowship with the Invisible, failed to discover God even there, and sought to embody their vague conceptions of Him in images of ivory and gold. Men have learned something of the divine intelligence and power in the material world, have read the name of God inscribed on earth and skies; but the question which most burdened their souls remained unanswered. Conscious sin weighed them down; and no salvation was reported by sun or stars. No revelation of mercy was given; no expression of love that was not drowned by the thunderings of wrath; no intimation of pardon, holiness, and a happy immortality, breaking through the cloud which obscured the divine face, and the veil that concealed an eternal state. But Christ reveals God, for He is "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person." In Himself He

unites the divine and the human. He is the ladder of the Bethel-vision which connects earth with heaven, and admits to the presence-chamber of God, where every inquiry of the soul, so far as these relate to a personal salvation, shall be answered. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also."

2. Christ reveals the way of acceptance with God.

We crave an interpretation of divine clemency. On what basis does it rest? Jesus answers, "I am the way." He has assumed our guilt and expiated it by His death. He has wrought out, in tears and agony and blood, a righteousness which meets our need; and we are pardoned and accepted in the Beloved. Does God require of us perfect obedience to His will? We remind Him that Christ, our representative before the law, has obeyed for us. Does He insist that the penalty which attaches to sin must be inflicted? We lift high the cross, trusting only in Him who hung upon it, and repeat the words prophetic inspiration wrote, cherished in the hearts of Christ's redeemed; "He was wounded for one transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." God answers: "The satisfaction is complete," and justice lays its thunders by.

3. Christ prepares us for heaven.

The removal of legal obstacles is not sufficient.

Moral fitness is required. We must be like God, if we would dwell with Him. Sin will never be permitted to cast its shadow on the sea of glass, or on the streets of gold. Now, our own hearts condemn us; and God is greater than our hearts. Yet the truth remains that Jesus is made unto us sanctification, also. He has begun a good work in us, and He will complete it. "Now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Thus Christ is the way to the Father, the only way. There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved. Though some, doubtless, have been saved without a knowledge of Christ; their spirit of teachableness and trust, joined with Godlike living, declaring them the children of God; yet, they owe their salvation to the death of the cross, and shall forever ascribe all glory to Him who shed for them His precious blood.

The philosophies of men, the dreamings of superstition, the self-righteousness of unbelief, the sincerity which hides in a refuge of lies, cannot save. Jesus says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

Once, certain travellers, ascending the Alps, lost their way, by reason of the snows which obscured their path, and they stood on the border of a precipice where to fall was to die. After long and anxious delay, looking in vain for the mountain

crucifix which with one arm told of danger, and with the other how to escape it; they heard with joy the cry of their guide who had gone on before, exclaiming, "The cross! The cross!" Then following the assuring voice they pressed safely on, reaching at last the summer-land in the valleys beyond. The summer-land of eternity is reached only by the way of the cross.

II. Christ is the truth.

1. His word is truth. He never speculates, questions, or doubts. He does not need a long process of reasoning to lead Him up to God, or to discover the secrets of the future. As a child He confounded the doctors in the temple, and they looked wonderingly at Him. Officers sent to apprehend Him, returned without Him, saying, "Never man spake like this man." His knowledge of men was infallible. He read their thoughts even afar off, heard the words they spake in secret, knew the motives that controlled their lives. He discoursed of God and eternity, of sin and salvation, of duty and truth, of heaven and hell; and none could disprove any statement He ever made. His word never wavered, but went straight to its mark. It never came in conflict with the enlightened consciousness of men, but confirmed it. It was never modified by scholarship, broken by criticism, refuted by history, or contradicted by succeeding events. He spake with a self-poise that

only certitude supports; with authority, and not as the scribes; with a penetration that brought the invisible to sight; with an impressiveness that gathered the solemnities of eternity around the listening soul. One of the rulers of the Jews, who held a protracted night interview with Jesus, impressed by His ministry and the miracles attending it, said, "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God." Mary sat at His feet, and His word answered every cry and questioning of her yearning heart. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" But went immediately out, shrinking from the scrutiny of the omniscient Nazarene. "I am the way and the truth."

2. Christ exemplified the truth.

There is a power in the life that does not reside in any abstract statement of truth. The great Roman orator might discourse never so eloquently concerning sobriety, and men were moved for the time to high resolves, but his teaching was neutralized by his example. Christ's life was a continual commentary on His words. Men might differ in their interpretation of the law, but they learned its spirituality and extent in the light of His immaculate life. To-day, as we contemplate this wonderful career, with no stain upon it, and no waver in it, we apprehend the grandeur of truth, and say of Jesus, as the Athenian court said of a noted witness, "His word is as good as an oath." Even infidelity, whilst denying His Godhead and Messiah-

ship, has paid homage to His moral grandeur, admitting that, in all the ages, He has never been equalled, and whatever the surprise of the future, He can never be surpassed.

3. The ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled in Christ.

It was truly said, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The first promise, respecting the bruising of the serpent's head, pointed to the incarnate, suffering Son of God. The offices of Christ were subjects of prophecy. God said to the Hebrew Lawgiver, "I will raise up a prophet from among thy brethren, like unto thee." In the fullness of time, when Jesus came, a greater than Moses, yet in His legislative and mediatorial character resembling him; it was said, "This is Jesus the prophet of Galilee."

Again God said of Christ, by the mouth of David, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek," and Paul wrote, ages after, "We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God."

His kingly office was predicted. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." In prospect of this, Zechariah, who stood near the close of the prophetic age, said, "Shout, O daughters of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee:" and these words we recall in connection with Christ's triumphal entrance into Jersusalem, and the inscription on the cross.

Moreover the Scriptures foretold Christ's two-fold nature, the Son of Man, and yet the everlasting Father. They intimated His lowly life, His rejection by His own people, His sufferings endured for sinners, the circumstances attending and following His death, His triumphal return to heaven, the angels watching His approach. All these were remarkable prophecies that could not be referred to natural penetration, but only to that divine omniscience which embraced distant ages and their unborn secrets in its view; and they found their fulfillment in Jesus who was born of a humble virgin, despised of men, crucified between two malefactors, raised from the dead, and exalted in glory.

4. Christ is the truth in that the symbolism of the Old Dispensation which referred to the Messiah was fulfilled in Him.

The volume of revelation was not commenced until twenty-five hundred years after creation; and then, the Pentateuch was the only Bible of the Hebrew Church for ages following. But the gospel antedated the written word. Men learned truth through object lessons. God's picture gallery, ever lengthening, was an object of devout study. Christ was adumbrated in expressive figures until He came. Types were instituted at the beginning, and multiplied as occasion required, or circumstances permitted. The sacrifices offered immediately after the expulsion from the garden were not suggestions

of human ingenuity, or the creation of will-worship; but divine appointments, foreshadowing redemption by substitution.

The paschal lamb was a type of Christ, and the blood on the door-post prefigured the sacrifice of Calvary. The brazen serpent lifted among the sad, soiled tents of Israel, predicted the uplifted cross and its royal victim, who healed the maladies of the soul. The manna which fell from heaven and sustained life; the smitten rock in Horeb which quenched thirst; the City of Refuge which protected the manslayer—all were symbols of Christ, the bread of heaven, the water of life, the refuge from wrath to come.

Christ is the truth. He is not a myth, but a person; not a fleeting vision, but an abiding presence; not a theophany, but the incarnated God, the reality we had craved, for the manifestation of which we had yearned. Trusting in Him we are done with the tossings of doubt, uncertainty and fear. We plant our feet on the Rock of Ages unmoved by the rollings of the angry sea. He that doeth Christ's will, or even honestly wills to do it, shall know the truth and be at rest.

III. Christ is the Life.

1. He purchased it. The price of redemption was infinite; only an infinite Redeemer could pay it. The law of God required a perfect obedience, and the wages of sin was death. Christ obeyed

and suffered. Thus He averted divine wrath and brought back the life we had lost. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

2. Christ conveys spiritual life to His people.

Passing along the paths of death, He says, "Live!" and we realize at once the quickening power of His life; just as natural life, at His word, returned to Lazarus, to the young man at Nain, and to the ruler's daughter. The Christ-consciousness becomes ours. The love of sin dies. The love of holiness is enthroned. Communion with God is restored. The believer goes from strength to strength, growing more Godlike as the days are numbered. Hence Paul writes to believers at Rome: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

3. Christ gives eternal life. This is the spiritual life perfected in the world to come. The difference is not in kind, but in degree. Heaven begins on earth. The source and support of life hereafter is Christ alone, and always. He is the light and glory of the world above. Material splendor is consonant with the spiritual glory of the place. Holy companionship contributes to the joy of the saint. Exemption from all evil brings unperturbed rest to the soul. But thrones of sublimity, crowns of glory, palms of victory, harps of

gold, are only the adjuncts of heavenly bliss. The spring of all our joy is Christ. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" The life of this world is the everlasting glory of the next.

But our Lord has in mind the completeness of redemption, as it extends to both body and soul, and we add:

4. Christ is the resurrection.

He came to save the whole man; to undo all the evil sin had done. Faith removes the sting of death, but it does not preserve from the grave. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." Nature shrinks from dissolution. As far as possible, it excludes the thought.

A certain tribe of savages leave the burial of their dead to strangers. No stone marks the spot where the departed sleep. Herds of cattle are driven over the grave until all traces of it are obliterated. To them death brings sadness only. They see no light beyond. But how comforting to believers, when the shadows fall and deepen, are the words of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life." In view of this Paul adds, "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality."

We have, in the life of Christ, foreshadowings of the final resurrection. Looking onward to the close of the present dispensation, we behold Him coming in the clouds, in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels. The trump of the arch-

angel sounds. The graves open. The dead arise. The living are changed, and all believers, clothed in spiritual, glorified bodies, ascend to meet their Lord in the air. Thus redemption is completed. Life has triumphed over death. A great multitude which no man can number are gone to be with Christ, to enjoy forever the inheritance reserved for them in heaven.

5. The sure ground of the Christian's hope.

Jesus is our all in all, and liveth forevermore. Unlike the priests of the Mosaic economy, who continued not by reason of death, Christ Jesus was constituted the High Priest of our profession after the power of an endless life. The fire that burned on Jewish altars has gone out, and the evening oblation has ceased forever. But the sacrifice of Christ, once made, shall never lose its power; and the word which now comes to us from the Lamb of God, reigning and triumphant in heaven,—"Because I live ye shall live also,"—is the pledge of our final victory, abundant entrance, and eternal residence with Him above. He is mighty to save.

I recall a remark made to me in one of the darkest periods of modern French history. When the armies of France had suffered many and disastrous defeats, and the enemy had encamped at Versailles, and crowded the avenues of the Bois Bolonge, one who loved his native land as he cherished his own life, said, "If the first Napoleon were yet alive, this shame and loss would not have come to my

beloved France." But the dust of the man who was once the arbiter of Europe's destiny sleeps on the banks of the Seine, and no appeal of suffering, no memory of Austerlitz or Ostend, no hated presence of a once vanquished foe, can awaken him out of sleep. How powerless the man styled great. But the Syrian stars do not look down on the grave of Christ. He lives, and His life is our life; and our years shall run parallel with His down the eternal ages.

6. The alternative presented in this parting message of Christ. It is to accept Him as the way, the truth and the life, and live; or reject Him, and die. Salvation through Christ, and through Him alone, is the burden of inspiration. Every altar-fire along the generations before Christ; the solemn priesthood of the Hebrew Church; the tabernacle in the wilderness; the temple crowning Mount Moriah; the faith and hope of patriarchs, prophets, apostles; the impressive asseveration and reiteration of Christ; the towers of the New Jerusalem lifted out of the mists, above the hills; the vision of Patmos; the testimony of Christians from the day revelation closed until now; and the experience of unbelievers in every age; make it evident that, in Christ, there is salvation for all; and, out of Him, salvation for none. He is our Ransom, Righteousness, Redeemer, the author and finisher of our faith, our light and life, our way and end. Do we truly believe? Is our faith theoretical only? Is our hope

a delusion? Let us make sure work for eternity. We do not accept the error of Rome, that doubt is an element of saving faith. It is our privilege to attain to the full assurance of hope.

My friend told me he had seen the Pyramids, and he spoke of the impression made upon his mind by those lofty summits, and by the stony-eyed sphynx, ever looking out on a desert sea, and gazing silently down upon many a pageant of worldly pomp and splendor as it passed by. When I asked his impression of the land called Holy, he plaintively said, "I have never been to Palestine. I left Alexandria in a vessel announced to stop at the port of Joppa. On our way a lone sail drew near. Signals were exchanged. We knew not the interpretation of them. We were then in sight of the Judean hills, and my heart leaped with gladness in prospect of seeing Jerusalem, Calvary and Olivet, and sitting among the trees of Gethsemane. But the prow of our vessel suddenly turned Westward and the coast of old Canaan faded from sight. We went to Athens and sailed the Adriatic. Alas! I have never been to Palestine, and now that I am old, and burdened with the infirmities of age, I never expect to tread the paths once trodden by the Saviour's feet."

The narrative impressed me. It suggested the question, "May many who hope to enter heaven come short of it?" How important that, in a life of holy obedience, advancing toward per-

fection as the years go by, we should have the evidence of saving union with Christ, who has so solemnly, and yet so tenderly said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

PHILIP'S IGNORANCE

*If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?* —JOHN xiv. 7–9.

*Our knowledge is but in part, and imperfect; the most of what we know, is the least of what we do not know. The gospel is as a rich piece of arras, rolled up; this God hath been unfolding ever since the first promise was made to Adam, opening it still every age wider than other; but the world shall sooner be at an end, than this mystery will be fully known. Indeed as a river does widen its channel, and grows broader, as it approacheth nearer to the sea; so the knowledge of this mystery doth spread every age more than other, and still will, as the world draws nearer to the sea of eternity, into which it must at last fall.*—GURNALL.

## IV

## PHILIP'S IGNORANCE

In announcing Himself the truth and the life, Jesus asserted His claim to the Godhead. These are incommunicable attributes. Human intelligence, when it has reached its summit, is not truth; and, unaided of God, cannot attain to a knowledge of it. No created being has ever evolved life from death, or brought something out of nothing. Christ occupies the higher plane of deity. But His disciples do not know Him fully. They have not comprehended His sayings concerning His essential unity with the Father. The time is near when they shall know better Him whom they have seen. But the day lingers. The veil of prejudice and erroneous preconception still hangs between. Hence one of them, speaking for the rest, says, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us."

In the theophanies of former times patriarchs and prophets had seen God, and in visions they beheld His glory. The disciples would have some such visible manifestation of the Father. Christ was evidently possessed of superhuman power. Let Him summon the Father out of His secrecy that they may behold Him, then shall their longings

be met. Their minds are confused. Christ Himself is a mystery. They admire His supernatural endowments, but their logic breaks down, and their promises do not lead to the conclusion that can awe and yet satisfy them; making that upper room in Jerusalem a veritable presence-chamber of God.

"Shew us the Father." Then Jesus, in a tone of mild rebuke, replies; "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" Olhausen, the devout German theologian, has well remarked that, "The language of Jesus to Philip plainly indicates that the struggle with the weakness of the disciples formed a part of the Redeemer's sufferings." In terms which are unequivocal, and which a disingenuous mind will not misinterpret, Christ asserts that He and the Father are one; and being essentially one, He is very God, whilst robed, for our sakes, in human form.

Let us observe:

1. The Necessity of Christ's Incarnation. "Shew us the Father."

It is difficult for us to measure the knowledge of God before the advent of Christ. It was evidently small. God was a spirit, and worldly eyes could not see Him. Men knew something of His attributes. In the beginning He had created the heavens and the earth. Therefore they concluded He was omnipotent. He had expressed His hatred

of sin in startling judgments, multiplied as the years advanced and wickedness increased. From all this they learned that He was just and holy. He had sent rain and fruitful seasons, and had filled their hearts with food and gladness. Moreover he had told them that provision had been made for their salvation, and that, in the fullness of time, redemption would be more clearly revealed. Hence they were persuaded that God was good.

Yet the testimony as to His character was conflicting. His attributes jostled each other, and in the expression of them there was an order of succession like that of day and night, of calm and storm. They were bewildered. After all the manifestations of Himself in His dealings with them, His power, justice and love were largely abstractions. Jehovah was an ideal being, curtained about with clouds, dwelling in silence, unseen and unknown. Men inquired after Him, turned their faces heavenward by day, by night, and besought Him to show Himself; but He still abode in mysterious secrecy. They sank under their burdens of care, anxiety and sorrow; and sobbed all along the darkened road. No voice of sympathy brought comfort, no supporting arm gave relief.

That this necessity might in some measure be met, God appeared at long intervals in a human form. Each interview was brief, and when ended, the miraculous presence vanished. To foreshadow redemption, a priesthood was appointed, altars

reared, sacrifices offered, and the Mosaic ritual extended through fifteen hundred years. But all this was inadequate. It was a hint of what was to come, rather than a ministry to immediate need. Largely because of this the Church embraced but few. Even when the theocracy was established the Israelites, as compared with surrounding nations, were a feeble people, occupying a small country shut in by mountain ranges and the great sea. The world waited for the Son of Mary. God must be revealed in human form, and continue in it. His perfections must link themselves with our nature; find expression in an audible voice; touch our trembling frame through human hands; pillow our aching heads on a human breast; illustrate every attribute of the Godhead in a life on earthly ground; interpret the written law by a personal example, and the promised redemption by the sacrifice of the cross. When all this had been accomplished, the narrow walls which enclosed Israel were taken down, and the gospel embraced in its compass the whole world. Then God was revealed in Christ.

Yet at the period we now contemplate we are reminded of:

2. The disciples' ignorance of Christ.

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" We are in danger of forming an uncharitable judgment of these early disciples. We are living in a better

day. Then, the sun was just rising above the hills. The light was dim, and objects were indistinct. The evidence of Christ's Godhead and of the truth of Christianity is cumulative. The mists have lifted and with us it is high noon. But to Philip and his associates there was a seeming contradiction in Christ's claims. In Him, strength and weakness, glory and shame, were strangely combined. His very works confused their judgment of Him; and His words were in apparent conflict. He was the Son of Mary, they knew. How then is He the Son of God? He began to live thirty years before. What does He mean when He says: "Before Abraham I am"? Has He not often spoken of the Father as being superior to Himself? How then can essential equality exist? Yet the evidence He had furnished of His Godhead should have been sufficient. Why could they not have waited for the interpretation of the humiliation, since they had beheld His glory on the Mount?

He wrought miracles, and thereby showed Himself superior to natural law. And if superior to natural law, He must have been maker of it; therefore God. When He walked on the Sea of Galilee, each footstep proclaimed His divinity. No imperial edict, as that of Canute's, could stay the tide when it had once set toward the shore; but winds and waves obeyed our Lord. When Lazarus, at His bidding, though he had been dead

four days, came forth; many who beheld this token of supernatural power believed Him to be divine.

Then, too, the most abstruse subjects were, to Christ's mind, as comprehensible as the simplest truths. His evident knowledge of God, the spirituality of His law, the solemnities of the future world, its mysterious inhabitants, its modes of life, and its eternal awards, suggested that He belonged to the world of which He spake. That Philip, who was the first subject of Christ's divine call, and for three years had attended on His public ministry, should have remained so far in ignorance of the Master's relations to the Father, is, even yet, an almost inexplicable fact. As the greatest of Romans when the fatal steel pierced him, experienced a sad, overwhelming surprise, exclaiming, "And thou, Brutus!" so Christ, who had often spoken of His oneness with the Father, the same in substance, equal in power and glory, had reason to express His sadness in that reproachful word, "Hast thou not known Me, Philip?"

These disciples lived in between the birth and death of Christ; between the manger-cradle and the cloud chariot; hence their limited knowledge was voiced in the request, "Shew us the Father." Yet they knew more than this request implies. They had learned what prophets never knew; had seen what the Hebrew Church had never seen; had experienced, in the deepest recesses of their being, what Bible saints had never felt. Their as-

sociation with Christ had been intimate, protracted and confidential; and they alone were qualified to be His apostles. Let us not think meanly of the eleven, even at this stage of their fellowship with Christ. They knew He was the Messiah of prophecy, and though they could not comprehend His relations to the Father, they esteemed the Son of God, as the light of the world, and the Redeemer of lost men; and they knew all this in a fullness and intensity the preceding ages had not known.

The character of God, which had been chiefly a veiled abstraction, a vague undivided unity, was revealed to them in the peerless beauty of Christ's life, as the bow which spans the retiring cloud unbraids the tissues of light and gives us the prismatic colors with which God paints the grass of the meadows, the lilies of the field, and the azure hue of distant mountains.

The disciples had learned so much of God in Christ, that they felt they knew comparatively nothing. They stood on the margin of great facts, of measureless thoughts, of infinite spaces; and the good they sought was so far removed that the space over which they had come seemed but a span, and their attitude toward God was one of great lowliness and true humbleness of mind. They might have known more. They had reason for gratitude that they did not know less. Their hearts were better than their heads; while in knowledge they excelled the stature of high priests and rulers, as in

physical form Saul, the son of Kish, towered above the child at his feet. And Christ was nearer right than Thomas when He said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," though the reply of the latter seemed against this conviction. Ignorance thinks it knows everything; knowledge, that it knows nothing.

The disciples knew more when Christ was gone. Then it was evident to them that His teaching, simple and yet profound, lucid as the light yet fathomless as the sea, leaving all philosophies far beneath, and dealing familiarly with mysteries hidden from human thought, proved Him God. His home was on high, in the realms of truth. For man's sake, He touched the earth for a little, and then returned to the world whence He came; as the angel from the plain of Mamre, and Gabriel from Daniel's chamber.

The narrative has lessons we shall do well to consider. We ought to know Christ better than His immediate disciples knew Him, and love Him more. The truth concerning Him has unfolded as the advancing day. Christ's name and influence live, a growing factor in the world's advancement, as the generations travel on. If His humiliation was great, so are His triumph and power. His life touches our secular life. The calendars of the civilized world recognize His birth. Poetry, painting and sculpture, draw their loftiest inspiration from Him. Beneficent government is largely based

on principles He enunciated. Emperors are crowned in His name. The world's most costly cathedrals are erected to His memory. Even corrupt religions maintain whatever of vitality they possess by inscribing His name on their altars, or writing it in their creeds. Earthly rulers may extend their possessions, and conquer feebler nations; they cannot control the affections or beliefs, of their subjects. But Jesus wins our love, dwells in the inner sanctuary of our being, and persuades us to think His thoughts, and choose His ways, and bind ourselves to Him in a devotion so great, that we would rather yield our lives than interrupt our loyalty to Him. Surely He is God.

The doctrine of Christ's essential equality with the Father, and oneness with Him; the doctrine of His proper, personal divinity; is the cornerstone of our precious faith. If He is not God our hope is vain, and we are yet in our sins. With the light afforded us, to deny that He is God of very God, is to perish in unbelief. To prove His eternal Sonship, John wrote his gospel. To win our confidence in Him who lived before the worlds, He sets forth the unparalleled integrity of His life, His infinite love, His measureless glory, and His readiness to receive all who come unto Him. Our Lord Himself was not willing to leave His disciples until they had learned His unity with the Father, and accepted Him as the spiritual Messiah. Hence His appeal to His miracles which expressed His

supernatural power, and proved Him God. "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake." At last Philip saw and believed. Doubting Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" and all the disciples crowned Him their King. Then Jesus' work was done, and He returned to the Father. Pentecost deepened the conviction of His divinity, drew thousands to the shelter of His cross, and attached them in unswerving loyalty to His throne.

If we are Christians, we feel that there is an infinite distance between ourselves and Christ, now exalted on His throne, and we thankfully bow the knee to Him who stooped that we might rise, and died that we might live. With Jean Paul Richter, we adore the Christ who, being "the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy, has lifted with His pierced hand empires off their hinges, and has turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages."

In conclusion, let us remember that it is not competent for us to determine how little knowledge of spiritual truth is consistent with salvation. Christ stoops to the lowest in intelligence who, conscious of sin, seek in Him salvation from it. The newborn soul may live within a horizon so narrow that it knows nothing of the intimations of Christ in Old Testament history, and of the long extended tutelage that prepared the way for the advent. Many never had heard of Moses, the

Hebrew Lawgiver, of David who sang of the expected Messiah, of Isaiah, who, looking from the summits of prophecy, beheld the conquering Prince of Peace; of Micah who with prophetic vision saw the world's Redeemer come forth from Bethlehem-Ephratah, the little city crowning the Judean hills; of Paul and Peter and John, and many of the great truths they recorded after the Sun of Righteousness shone in the zenith of the glorious coronation; may be unable to define the terms which set forth the sovereignity of God, the eternal election, the work of the Spirit, the second Advent of our Lord; or to trace the line of Christian experience which, starting with sin, runs through realms of grace, and leads to a kingdom of glory.

But it is necessary, to a saving faith, that there shall be a conception of Christ's personal glory, lifted infinitely above the level of our humanity, truly God, mighty to save and strong to deliver. May the Holy Spirit, whatever else may be withheld, teach us who Christ is, what was His errand to this world, and His willingness and power to save all who seek access to the Father through Him. And now with an experience of His love, a place in His kingdom, and a hope of heaven, which brightens with the advancing years; having seen much of His glory as revealed in the Word of God, and as interpreted by the Holy Spirit, let us bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all.

# CHRIST'S ONENESS WITH THE FATHER

*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake.*—JOHN xiv. 10, 11.

*Mahomet, come to replace the reign of idols, did not call himself God, but a simple envoy of God. And if we would go back beyond idolatry in search of the most arrogant impostures, we shall find even in the heart of India nothing but narrations without consistency, ages without date, a shapeless abyss, in which our vision will be totally unable to discover any authentic mortal bold enough to declare that he was God, formally and distinctly, by those two ineffable words: I am.*—LACORDAIRE.

## V

## CHRIST'S ONENESS WITH THE FATHER

Our Lord having reproved the ignorance of His disciples touching His essential unity with the Father, proceeds to restate this oneness in terms which involve His personal divinity. He alludes to His words and to His works. These are corroborative.

His teachings, supported by the consciousness of men, and answering their soul's cry, unanswered before, and bringing them under the power of an invisible world, were in harmony with His works and confirmed by them. Hence Jesus says, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself;" that is, not as a mere man, independently of God; "but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

The relation which Christ sustains to the Father, described by the words, "I am in the Father and the Father in Me," declares His proper, personal Godhead. In harmony with this, one of the venerable creeds of the church says of Christ, He is "God of very God." This doctrine of our Lord's divinity, is fundamental to the Christian's system. This interprets the emphasis laid upon it in Christ's farewell address. The acceptance of it is necessary

to our fellowship with the Father and with the Son; to an intelligent restful hope; and to the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing through the words of Christ that we have been born of God.

When it is remembered that Christ spake not only to His immediate disciples, and to the age in which He lived, but also to the race, and to all the generations following; we do well to consider the evidence of His divinity, as furnished both in His words and works.

Jesus was a unique person, in whom two distinct natures, the human and divine, were indissolubly joined. Let us meditate for a while on His personal divinity. The scriptural argument in support of this doctrine is unanswerable. But let us consider it from lower grounds, then advance to the higher.

1. The results of Christ's life cannot be accounted for except on the ground of His divinity.

We are asked to believe in Him "for the very works' sake." When the Saviour left the world, His disciples numbered five hundred; but He had laid the indestructible foundations of the church which is destined to embrace the whole world.

Of this consummation an intimation was given on the day of Pentecost, and during the weeks following, when converts representing all nations were rapidly multiplied, and the hope was cherished by the fact, that during the first century of the Chris-

tian era, the gospel extended its conquest from Jerusalem to the ends of the then known earth.

Those were not merely human hands that accomplished this result. Christ's humble origin was unfavorable for a great revolution in the religious thought of the world. It isolated Him from the sympathy and support of those who controlled popular sentiment, and from all the agencies of worldly power. Moreover, He spent nearly all His life in an insignificant village, and among despised Galileans. Hence the derisive inquiry—"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and the oft repeated statement, opposed to His authority as a Teacher, "Out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet."

Christ's lowliness in birth and social relations, as viewed from a merely human standpoint, was against Him. It surely gave no promise of a world-wide influence and moral power exceeding that of the Cæsars.

More than this, Christ was uneducated. His poverty precluded the possibility of study. He had no Gamaliel to instruct Him, no noted Rabbi to aid His search after truth. He had not the advantages of an ordinary education, such as the poorest child enjoys to-day. "How knoweth this man letters (or learning) having never learned?" And yet at the age of thirty, Jesus came forth from the obscurity of Nazareth, in the garb of a humble artisan, and announced Himself the long-expected Messiah.

The common people scorned Him; the rulers thought Him mad; and the priesthood pronounced Him a blasphemer who deserved to die. And yet He lived and taught, and wrought greater works than Moses or any later prophet. He went where He pleased, and none dared harm Him. Men were sent to apprehend Him, and returned without Him. An infuriated mob gathered about Him, and He walked calmly out of their midst, as Israel through the Jordan, and went His way. It is true He suffered an ignominious death at the last; but it was with His own consent. The cross was a symbol of triumph. The sepulchre was the gate of glory. Having ascended to the Father, He shook the world to its centre by the words He spake through His disciples, confirmed by signs following.

Does the history of the world, through six thousand years, furnish a life at all comparable to His? Did any one ever surmount obstacles so formidable, and from like obscurity rise to equal eminence? Moses was great, and his memory will never die; but who would compare the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter with the Son of Mary; the man learned in all wisdom of Egypt, with the untutored carpenter of Nazareth; the man who had the sympathies of two millions of people, with the despised Galilean whose friends were few and powerless to aid Him? And yet, with all his advantages of position, education, and national support; the work of this greatest of Hebrews

was but a dim foreshadowing of the mission of Jesus.

In later times there have been men who were as "levers to uplift the earth and roll it in another course." That He may magnify His grace, God often chooses the least promising agencies to accomplish His great designs. When He would reveal a new world, which should be the asylum of His oppressed saints, a seeming outpost of heaven, He selected the son of a woolcomber, a sailor boy on the Mediterranean, and sent him on a perillous but successful voyage across a pathless sea. When He would roll back the clouds of error which had gathered over papal Europe, and lead a dark-minded and burdened people to the cross, and thence into the light of a glorious hope, He chose as the medium of His power the son of a miner, the secluded monk of Erfurt. When He would quicken to newness of life a languishing Church, and send salvation beyond the seas, He designated as the honored instrument, a humble youth engaged in menial employment in a village inn. But by gradual steps, long discipline, protracted and life-consuming labor, these men attained to eminence and power; yet none of them approached, even remotely, to the grandeur of the life which began in Bethlehem, was obscured at the cross, and then triumphed over death and hell. How explain this singular greatness; this isolation from all the race; this incomparable superiority to all

who had lived before Him? I know not how, except on the ground of His divinity. He lived among men, and yet was infinitely exalted above them. He is the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, whose coming the prophets foretold, whose birth the angels announced, whose glorified humanity the highest heavens received.

2. Consider, next, the means by which Christ attained to power.

There are religious sects whose founders made their converts by means of the sword, or commanded the support of royalty, or with the aid of great armies hewed their way to success. Some appealed to the fears, the passions, and the lusts of men. They put themselves in harmony with human depravity, or pretended to meet the necessities of man's higher nature on conditions which required no worldly sacrifice or loss. Hence the false religions of the East, and the disbeliefs of the West. It is the old spirit in man which would retain the sins of Sodom and yet escape its doom; that prefers Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, to all the waters of Israel; that would make everything of self, nothing of Him who is the only Redeemer of men.

But Jesus did not establish His kingdom by resorting to violence, or by conniving at sin. His church was founded by love, and its fruit was holiness. He labored alone. He walked quietly

abroad, speaking with authority and yet simply, that the illiterate might comprehend; and affectionately, that hearts might be won, to the truth. If He spake of wrath to come, He did it tenderly, and then revealed a refuge from it. Thus, under a sweet constraint, men gave up everything for Him, dismissed their prejudices and their sins, and, taking the attitude of discipleship, learned of Him!

And He still maintains His kingdom by the same means. "The love of Christ constraineth us." Men have surrendered worldly wealth, submitted to all modes of torture, and have died at the stake, on the gibbet, and by the rack, for the love Jesus bore to them, and the love they bore to Him.

When the enemies of Christ have banded themselves against the Church; when the little flock has been scattered abroad; when infidelity has scoffed at our precious faith, and all things seemed against the truth and its friends; even then the love of Christ has bound to His person and His cross a faithful few, and to-day there are millions, in this and other lands, who would die before the going down of the sun, rather than deny the Lord that bought them.

This cannot be said of any other. He was fully competent to speak who said, "Alexander, Cæsar, Hannibal, Louis XIV., conquered the world and had not a friend." When a prisoner on the island of St. Helena, Napoleon said, with a choked utterance; "Now that I am alone, chained

to this rock, who fights and wins empires for me? Where are any ready to share my misfortunes? Any to think of me? Who bestirs himself for me in Europe? Who remains faithful to me? Where are my friends?" And then he added, "What a wide abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved and adored, and which is extended over all the earth." Can all this be explained on the assumption that Jesus was a mere man, or the greatest of men? Could the ministry of an uneducated Nazarene, continued through only three years, opposed by rulers, and scorned by the great, have secured such results, laying the foundations of a mightier kingdom than the world ever saw before, or has since beheld, established not by physical might nor worldly power, if the Son of Mary had not also been, what He claimed to be, the Son of God? "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

3. Christ's conquests are Spiritual.

Herein He is distinguished from all other conquerors. He enters a realm which no one else has ever entered, and reigns supreme where no one else has ever reigned. We are familiar with the victories carnal weapons have achieved. We accept all that history records concerning Alexander, who, when but twenty-two years of age, carried his conquering arms from Macedon to the shores of the Indian Ocean; of Hannibal, who crossed the Alps,

and, at the age of thirty-six, encamped his army under the very shadow of the Roman Capitol; of Napoleon, at the age of thirty-three an emperor, and the acknowledged umpire of Europe. But there is a wide distinction between the subjugation of a continent and the conquest of a single mind. Rollin, in his "Ancient History" has said, "the kings who glory so much in their power, have nothing that approximates in the least to that of Christ. They do not reign over the will of man, which is real dominion. Their subjects can think as they please, independently of them. But with Christ it is far otherwise. 'All power is given unto Him, in heaven, and on earth.' He exercises it principally upon the minds and hearts of men. Nothing is done without His permission. Everything is disposed by His wisdom and power."

4. The Character of Jesus furnishes an argument for His Divinity.

It is the only perfect character the world has ever seen. Through all His life Christ maintained an untarnished holiness. He exhibited supreme love to God, and a measureless love to men. The powers and virtues of His soul continued in uninterrupted harmony. One attribute of excellence did not exclude another. If His majesty was calculated to overawe men, His condescension attracted them. If He moved among His people as one who came from another world, and was spiritually isolated from this, yet it was soon discovered that

He was in the deepest sympathy with our race, and not ashamed to call the lowliest, brethren. If He was faithful in His portrayal of human character, and with the greatest solemnity foretold the consequences of sin, yet an unparalleled tenderness marked every utterance, and an habitual yearning for the salvation of men. He was tempted, but never sinned. He was reviled, but reviled not again. He was persecuted, but threatened not. Men scoffed at and cursed Him, sought His life and took it; but He addressed them in loving messages, pronounced benedictions upon them, and died interceding in their behalf.

Let infidelity fix its gaze upon the Son of Man, and stay it there; and it will experience a sense of awe inspired by that matchless humanity—God manifested in the flesh. Only the blind blaspheme. Only the self-deceived draw shameful caricatures of Christ. They are like the idiot who thought to paint the glorious morning with charcoal. We have grown familiar with Rosseau's declaration, "Socrates lived and died like a Sage; but Jesus Christ lived and died like a God."

Could one charge affecting His moral character have been brought against Christ, and sustained, that alone would have invalidated His claim to Messiahship, and brought to a perpetual end the system of religion which bears His name. On the other hand, if we concede moral perfection to Christ, we must recognize His divinity. Holy as

God is holy, He could say "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me."

5. We infer His Divinity from His teachings.

He taught as no man ever taught. He introduced men into a world of thought they had never entered, or on the borders of which they had stood, peering out upon the great unknown. He solved dark enigmas, answered anxious questionings, harmonized what seemed in eternal conflict. He revealed God to men; revealed man to himself. He foretold the future; predicted human destiny; brought life and immortality to light. He spake of sin and depravity; of the new-birth and holiness; of faith and its reward; of hope and its fruition; of the final judgment, and eternal retribution. It was the Father that dwelt in Him that spake the wondrous words; and Jesus affirms unity in essence and operation with the Supreme intelligence of heaven and earth.

Some have compared Jesus with Socrates, who lived four centuries before Him. We admire the heathen sage whose vision compassed a wide domain of truth. But for much he learned, he was indebted to that innate moral consciousness which never quite departs from man; to the traditions which came to him from the old Hebrew Church; and to the influence of the yet to be incarnate Truth, whose coming was consciously needed and even intimated by such exceptional men as himself, and Plato, and Zeno. Yet what these intellectual

giants discovered were only fragments of a few truths which Jesus knew perfectly and from the beginning.

It is true that Socrates taught the immortality of the soul; but he also denied it. He said that to be virtuous, men needed the aid of the great Supreme; but he trusted in false deities. His disciples said he convinced them by powerful arguments one day, and plunged them into unbelief the next. But Jesus spake with authority. At His coming the darkness fled. There was a beauty, fullness, and grandeur in His teachings, that separated Him by an infinite chasm from the noted men of Athens and Rome. He compassed the whole range of needful knowledge; and hence, though nearly two thousand years have passed since He taught, not one important addition has been made to the system of truth which He gave us. He stands at the end of the old dispensation, like some great promontory, and there is no beyond: or like the sun at noon, and the light cannot be augmented. Well did He say, on one occasion when He came to the temple as the morning sun gilded the hills of Judea and was reflected from the white domes of Jerusalem, "I am the light of the world." And as we look upon Him, across the ages that lie between, we may well uncover our heads, while our hearts leap with gladness at the very mention of His name; saying, as did the great Napoleon, "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus is not a man."

6. The History of the Gospel proves the divinity of Christ.

The Religion of Jesus originated with its necessity. It is nearly six thousand years old. Its first utterance was a promise which relieved the darkness of the fall. It appeared in the first sacrifice, offered just outside the gate of Paradise lost. It antedated all false religions. It has outlived human systems of faith that were environed with pomp and supported by power. It has survived the religions of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, whose temples are in ruins, and their sacred groves deserted; and to-day it is as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.

Its triumphs since our Lord's return to the Father, confirm our faith. To His disciples their Master said, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father." When, a little later, illiterate fishermen preached Jesus and the resurrection, Pharisees and priests laughed them to scorn. Though for a time misrepresented, and proscribed; though running counter to all the sinful propensities of men, glorying only in the cross on which a reputed malefactor died; the truth triumphed over error, and spread abroad through all the known world. The poor received the word with gladness. Members of Cæsar's household believed. Senators and knights confessed Christ. The highest order of talent was consecrated to the once despised faith. Justin Martyr, Irenæus,

Clement, Tertullian, Cyprian, embraced and advocated Christianity. The history of the first centuries, whether written by an Origen or a Pliny, a Eusebius or a Tacitus, a Tertullian or a Gibbon, a friend or a foe; is a record of triumphs. The Parthenon and the Pantheon gave way to the Christian temple, and the "gods many" laid aside their dumb sceptres that Jesus might be exalted and crowned.

To-day the Christian Sanctuary is reared beside the Pagoda, hard by the temple of Brahm, and in the shadow of the Islam mosque. Jesus is honored by multitudes in Europe, both crowned heads and peasants. He has followers in Africa, along the Nile, on both sides the equator, and down by the Southern pole; in Greenland, in Labrador, in Brazil, and on the isles of sea; as well as in our own country and in Great Britain, on whose possessions the sun never sets. Does this furnish no argument for Christ's divinity? Shall we compare Confucius with Jesus, or liken Mahomet to the Son of God? Christ is one with the Father; hence, in speaking of the mighty things He wrought, He said, "He doeth the works."

Then witness the fruits of Christianity in individual lives. It has delivered from guilt, released from bondage, and cleansed from the defilement of sin. It has brought quietness, holiness, and earnests of heaven. It has broadened the horizon of thought, enlarged human being, lifted believers

above the visible worlds, and caused them to dwell in the presence of the glorified Christ. It has sustained in affliction, supported in weakness, and comforted in death. It has made men more manly. It has imparted to them a sense of harmony with great possibilities, the true end of their creation, and their quenchless immortality.

7. The Scriptural argument for the Divinity of Christ is conclusive.

Note the titles which are given to Christ in the Bible;—He is called God, Jehovah, God's beloved Son; the perfections which are ascribed to Him, such as Eternity, Omniscence, Omnipresence; the works He performed,—He made the worlds, controlled the elements of nature, cured incurable diseases, raised the dead; the worship He received, —the early Christians rendering Him the homage due to God alone, and visitors from heaven, as on the Mount, doing Him reverence; the fulfillment of prophecy which foretold His coming, the time and place and circumstance of His birth, the fruits of His life, and the manner of His death—all these proclaim Him divine.

Then we have statements in the Scripture applying to Christ only, such as these; "The word was God." "God manifest in the flesh." "God with us." "Jesus Christ is Lord of all." "Christ is over all." "God blessed forever." Jesus says—"I and the Father are one." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "I am

Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is and which was, and which is to come, The Almighty," "Before Abraham was I am."

Thus the Godhead of Christ is established. In substance, in power and glory; in all the incommunicable attributes of divinity; He is one with the Father. At the same time He announced His independent subsistence. Everything that constituted individuality of person belonged to Him. Hence He said, "I lay down My life and I take it again." His personal endurance of death, and His victory over it, proclaimed Him God, attested His claim to the Messiahship, and enthroned Him in eternal glory.

Evidently Jesus is at an infinite remove from the divinities of philosophy and the gods of paganism. The latter were only deified men. They originally belonged to our race, and carried the attributes of humanity into their ideal state. Each was limited as to his sphere of activity and manifestation of power. One presided over the mountains, another over the plains; one over the rivers, another over the far-reaching yet shore-bounded seas. One was god of war and another of peace. But Christ is God over all. His dominion is wide as the universe. His presence fills the measureless space. His life kindles suns. His hand moves the worlds. The order of material systems is the expression of His all-controlling power. The lofty intelligences before the throne were born of His

creative energy, and are supported by His omnipotence. Hence, they worship Him, and are ever attentive to His behests. Even Gabriel is His willing servant, never questioning His absolute authority, nor inquired the reason for His command.

We sinners have, in Christ, an Almighty Saviour. We can ask nothing more; we can be satisfied with nothing less. We commit our souls to Him with a confidence that should never waver. Though we are least of all saints, each of us may say with the Apostle Paul; "I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day;" patiently waiting the summons to the home above, and to the rest which is complete, secure, and eternal.

# GREATER WORKS THAN CHRIST'S

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.*

—JOHN xiv. 12.

*Christianity arose in the mystic depths of man's soul, and was spread abroad by the preaching of the Word, by simple and altogether natural and individual efforts, and flew like hallowed fire from heart to heart till all were purified and illuminated by it, and its heavenly light shone, as it still shines, and as sun or star will ever shine, through the whole dark destinies of man.*—THOMAS CARLYLE.

## VI

## GREATER WORKS THAN CHRIST'S

CHRIST wrought miracles. This is an historical fact which some have disputed but no one has disproved. It is as certain that He performed supernatural works as that Cæsar invaded Gaul, or that Napoleon crossed the Alps. To deny miracles is to dethrone God and deify natural law. The maker of natural law is superior to it, and can set it aside at pleasure. This Jesus did, and He cites His miracles as evidences of His Messiahship. Since He was very God, robed for our sakes in human form, He would have us believe on Him that we may be enthroned with Him.

1. For the comforting of His disciples, He makes the remarkable statement that they should do the works He had done. Thus far they had not been honored with this distinction, and had never expected it. Hence, no doubt, for a moment, they were startled by the announcement, and unable to receive it. This power was given for a season only. Christ Himself did not resort to miracles except in great emergencies. He did this in view of the unbelief of the Jews. One of the great proofs of His Messiahship, was found in

His exercise of divine power, beholding which, many believed on Him. So, too, in the establishment of His spiritual kingdom, with all the influence of Hebrew scholarship, the deeply rooted prejudices of prevailing religions, the splendor of old philosophies and the power of thrones arrayed against the truth, it was necessary that the Church should make good its claim to divine origin and its spiritual relations to the source of all intelligence and power.

Miracles furnished to ordinary minds the most convincing support of this seemingly arrogant assumption. Hence the apostles were empowered to do Christ's works. They healed the sick, made the lame to walk, cast out devils, and raised the dead. The world accepted this proof of revealed religion. This being accomplished, and recorded as a fully accredited fact of history, the exercise of miraculous power ceased with the apostles. The reputed miracles of Rome, and of exceptional portions of the Protestant Church, in our day, evidently do violence to that promise of supernatural works which was limited to a special need and a brief period.

2. But Christ's promise to the believer went still further. He added this significant statement; "And greater works than these shall he do because I go to the Father." This also, at first view, seemed incredible. Moreover, it was an exaltation of the believer which appeared to dishonor Christ.

Shall any finite creature, do greater works than the Son of God? The mystery is relieved by a very simple interpretation. The greater works, and the less, were wrought in the power of Christ. The apostles were instruments only. When Peter and John, beholding the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, gave him power to walk, they were careful to refer the miracle to a superhuman source. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole."

Here the question arises, What were the greater works that were wrought in Christ's name? Different answers are given, the true one may readily be found.

(*a*) Negatively: It was not meant that the apostles should perform greater physical miracles than Christ. To attempt any such discrimination in favor of the works of the disciples, would be a weakness on our part, and an offence to our Lord. Some old writers interpreted the promise as referring exclusively to miraculous acts, and then endeavor to sustain the promise by comparing the works. They remind us that the shadow of Peter passing by healed those on whom it fell, and that a handkerchief which Paul had touched carried with it like efficacy. Herein they found the proof of greater power. The miracles wrought by the apos-

tles we do not dispute, but the comparison is unwarranted. Christ performed greater miracles than His disciples.

Take a single example: His resurrection is attributed to an inherent power. He Himself said that if the temple of His body were destroyed He would raise it on the third day. This He did, for He rose in the exercise of His own will. This was a greater miracle than the raising of Lazarus. Where, in all history, did any one else ever awake himself out of the sleep of death? This was the crowning miracle of Christ. In the class to which it belongs, there can be no parallel. As Mount Blanc of the Old World rises far above the lower peaks, so Christ's resurrection, by His own power, transcends all other miracles.

(*b*) Affirmatively: The promise that the apostles should do greater works than Christ had wrought, refers to spiritual results, not to physical miracles. The work which imparts spiritual life is above that which raises the physically dead. It is as much greater as the soul is more valuable than its earthly tenement. The conversion of Matthew was a greater miracle than the stilling of the tempest, the feeding of the five thousand, or the raising of the widow's son of Nain.

Now observe that the apostles were more successful preachers of the Word than was Christ. During the three years of our Saviour's ministry five hundred were converted; under the preaching of

a single sermon by Peter, on the day of Pentecost, three thousand were born again. If numbers are to be the determining factor in this comparison, then the servant's work was greater than his Lord's. Moreover, the immediate results of the Pentecostal sermon represented only a small segment of the territory conquered for Christ by His apostles.

The greatest miracle of the ages was the spread of Christianity during the closing years of the first century. No ermine clothed it. No orators pleaded its cause. No imperial shield protected it. No armies hewed for it a way to success. Yet the gospel was carried into all the great cities of Asia Minor; to classic Athens, clustering its homes around the Acropolis; to proud Corinth, on the shore of the Ægean; to Rome, with its idolatry and crimes; and to the vessels which traversed the Mediterranean. Paul preached Christ in Palestine, in Illyricum, and in all the regions lying between; and the multitude of believers extended in continuous line all the way from the scenes of Christ's crucifixion to the Pillars of Hercules, which marked the extremities of the known earth. Christ sowed the seed and the apostles reaped the harvest. He laid the foundations of the Church, deep and broad, and they reared the superstructure. Their work has been the wonder of all the centuries coming after. The paucity of conversions under Christ's ministry, as compared with the number under the preaching of Peter and the

greater ministry of Paul, finds its interpretation in the several dispensations of the Godhead which assigned the atonement to Christ, and conversion to the Holy Spirit.

To make a satisfaction for sin, adequate and eternal; a result that made possible the salvation of the race; that provided for the application of redemption to men; that defied the powers of darkness and conquered death and hell; a work for which the world was being prepared through the long period of four thousand years; priests, altars and sacrifices directing attention to the cross, and prophets unfolding the plan of redemption with a definiteness which continually advanced—all this was a work which will be the admiration of heaven and the joy of earth forever. It prepared the way for the work of the Holy Spirit through the agency of the church formed under the ministry of Christ, the fruits of which shall shake like Lebanon, and prolong the name of Jesus long as the sun.

2. Christ indicates the condition on which the Holy Spirit is given to the Church. "Because I go unto the Father." It was ordered, in the scheme of redemption, that Christ, having completed His earthly mission, should return to the world whence He came. This was required by the functions of His office as Priest. Having made a sufficient sacrifice for sin, He must present the evidence of it in the Holy Place on high.

This necessity had been set forth in the custom of the day of atonement, when the offering of the typical sacrifice was followed by the impressive ceremony of carrying the blood of the victim into the most sacred precinct of the tabernacle, and subsequently of the temple, behind the veil, where, hidden from the view of all Israel, the priest presented the same to God, and made intercession for the people. When the day was near its close, Mount Olivet holding the last rays of the setting sun, the reappearing of the priest was the signal for rejoicing. The hills around Jerusalem echoed the sound of the trumpet, and a forgiven people wept for gladness. A few hours later, a holy peacefulness prevailed throughout the Holy City, and one devout Israelite might have been heard saying to another: "Behold Jerusalem, a quiet habitation."

The Holy Spirit's work was delayed until both the sacrifice for sin had been made, and our Lord had ascended. Soon the cross passes into history, and Jesus refers to His early compliance with the remaining requirement of the ancient covenant: "Because I go unto My Father." The time appointed for His departure having arrived, He left His disciples, and went within the veil. Then the Holy Spirit, "another Comforter" came, in virtue of the accomplished atonement, and its acceptance in heaven. Now we recall the words of Jesus: "It is expedient for you that I go away," and the interpretation comes to us borne on the atmosphere

which the Holy Spirit has brought with Him from the world we hope soon to enter.

It was ten days after Christ's departure that the gift of the Holy Ghost was bestowed, and Pentecost rose above the level of ordinary days, radiant with celestial light, while apostles, speaking with other tongues, went forth to conquer the world for Christ, and, as respects the ministry of the Word, to do the "greater things" Christ had promised, He working in them and through them by the power of the Holy Spirit whom He had sent.

3. The condition on which we receive power from God. It is simply, and always, and for every one; the faith which works by love. The solemn asseveration of Jesus shall stand until His second coming: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father." An implicit faith in Christ is required; a belief in His Godhead, in His atonement, in His willingness to regenerate souls through our instrumentality, and secure to us a measure of fruitfulness that shall enrich both earth and heaven. Such a faith, warranted by the word and character of Christ, explains the marvellous success of the Apostolic ministry.

A like faith has always clothed the human instrument with divine power. It made Luther's words resonant, and mighty as the Rhinefalls; made

John Knox a peerless preacher, whom Scotland heard with the marrow of her bones; made Whitefield the seraphic evangelist, suggesting the angel of the Apocalypse whom the Seer of Patmos described; and gave to Wesley and Summerfield and Nettleton and Spurgeon the power by which they removed mountains, that Christ's triumphal car might roll gloriously on.

This faith expresses itself in prayer, transacting thus with the source of power, and putting on the winsomeness, spirituality, and divine energy by which men redeemed by blood may attract lost souls to Christ and to the Kingdom of His glory. The Christians in any Church and age who have been mighty with God, who have girdled the ministry with power, who have won souls to Christ by the beauty of their example, and have inspired with faith and hope and holy zeal those whose lives they touched; have been those who took time for prayer, who conquered vacillating moods, resisted temptations to worldliness, overcame selfishness and self-seeking and broke the power of all sin by habitual communion with Christ in the seclusion of secret devotion.

If we would do great things for Christ: if we would bring salvation to our homes; divine power to the Church; and a regenerated world to the Master's feet; we, as divinely appointed workers together with Him, must renounce our foibles our follies, and our easily-besetting sins, and conse-

crate ourselves wholly, unreservedly to Christ, who has pledged His truth to help us do greater works than His, through the power of the Holy Ghost given unto all who believe in Him and do His commandments.

Greater works are yet to be done by the Church. Another Pentecost is coming on. Neither the material nor spiritual world are yet fully exploited. There are forces in nature yet to be developed. There are inventive triumphs yet to be achieved. There are secrets still locked up in electricity and magnetism, light and heat, winds and waves, that shall be revealed, and the wonders of the nineteenth century will be excelled in the centuries to come. We are only on the margin of natural disclosures by means of which human progress shall advance with the strides of the fabled Titans. Out of the thoughts of ages shall suddenly spring greater thoughts which will so extend the curtains of our habitation that it may take in distant worlds, and entertain the inhabitants of other spheres. All this is material progress. It has to do with only the life that now is. Think you that it is God's purpose that nature shall outrun grace, that earthly kingdoms shall leave behind them the reign of His well-beloved Son? It cannot be. All else is scaffolding which aids the erection of the Temple in which the Shekinah shall dwell.

Miracles, which were Christ's credentials, were also exemplifications of spiritual works that shall

surpass all natural achievements. The disciples, the Jewish nation, and strangers from afar, beheld with wonder the opening of blind eyes, the unstopping of deaf ears, the instantaneous cleansing of lepers, and the raising of the dead; the like of which the world had never seen before. But it was permitted to the disciples, when Christ was gone —a privilege extended to believers through all the ages following—to do greater works than these: to open the eyes of the understanding, to unstop the deaf ears of the soul, to cleanse the morally defiled, to raise the spiritually dead. The fruits of Christ's miracles were temporary; the fruits of spiritual works are eternal. The one brightened and blessed what remained of a short earthly life; the other sets lost men among the sons of God, robes them in garments of immortality, enthrones them in eternal glory; greater works than any physical miracle Christ wrought in far Galilee.

Yet after all, it is gratefully admitted that these results are attained only in the power of Christ working through human agency. Christ though gone, lives with men. He continues His mission; still goes in at the Jericho gate; carries salvation to Zacchæus' home; and preaches in the temple, and down by the seaside, where the music of waves is the accompaniment of the precious evangel. He is present by His chosen representatives. And now, that we may be stimulated to noble endeavor in His name, a voice addresses us from heaven, the

same once heard in the Upper Chamber in Jerusalem; a voice earnest, affectionate and assuring; revealing the future glorious triumphs of the truth; every knee bowing at the feet of Christ; every tongue confessing Him Lord of All; this sad, guilt-burdened, sin-defiled world cleansed and beautified, and singing loud hosannas as it pursues its circuit through the heavens. Listen to the word: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works I did he shall do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."

The responsibility of results is with us. God waits to clothe us with power that we may extend salvation to our kindred according to the flesh; to the community we touch; to the land in which we dwell; to the world's remotest bounds. Christian! The age is solemn; opportunities of usefulness are hastening by; souls are dying; eternity is near. May God give you grace to fill up the measure of your responsibility, and hasten the conversion of the world to Christ.

PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER

*And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it.*—JOHN xiv. 13, 14.

*As man within his sphere can use these fixed laws to accomplish the most diversified purposes, so God in His unlimited sphere has them always and everywhere under His absolute control, so that, without suspending or violating them, they are ever subservient to His will. If the fact that men can use the laws of nature to their own ends and advantages is compatible with the uniformity of those laws, the control of God over them for the accomplishment of His purposes cannot be inconsistent with their stability as laws.*—DR. C. HODGE.

## VII

## PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER

PRAYER is the offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to His will. It includes also confession of sin, and a thankful acknowledgment of God's mercies. It is addressed to God, in the name of Christ, and is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Yet since God is one, it may be addressed to any person of the Holy Trinity; involving, nevertheless, a recognition of Christ's mediatorial character, and our own dependence for guidance and efficiency on the Spirit. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." And the apostle reminds us that we have access to the throne of grace by the Spirit alone, all spiritual acts being inspired by Him. He imparts that faith which prevails, and the unction which makes prayer acceptable, a fragrant censer in the temple of divine worship.

Let it also be noted that each person in the Godhead, hears the petitions offered in the name of Christ. Hence our Lord said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Prayer is an act of obedience. We are instructed to call upon God, to make our requests, and to bring our tribute

of adoration, thanksgiving and praise to Him. It is a condition on which the bestowment of all good is contingent. "Ask, and it shall be given you." "I will be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do these things unto them." "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It is also a means of cultivating humility; a sense of dependence on God, love, gratitude and faith; and of assimilating us to the divine character which is the object of our contemplation.

The subjects of prayer are temporal and spiritual blessings. For the first, beyond the limits of necessity, we ask conditionally. The prayer of faith should not falter within the range of imperative need; though God's interpretation of need may differ from ours. He who clothes the grass of the field and the lilies in their beauty; who gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens when they cry; will reward the trustful faith of the diligent with temporal good. It is our privilege, when there may be but a handful of meal in the barrel and the cruise of oil is well-nigh exhausted, to take our need to God in prayer. He will send Elijah, or bless abundantly the labor of our hands.

It is well to carry all our wants to God. To tell Him our little daily, vexing cares; asking grace to bear them, and wisdom to guide, and every required help in Christian service, whether it be high or low. God is well pleased when we do this. Then, too, we may bring our sicknesses to Him. He

may act directly upon our physical disorders, as when moral agencies are required; yet in accordance with His well-established laws. Or He may work through intermediate agencies, and bless the means employed. We need more of that faith which looks first of all to the Divine physician and then uses appropriate means, in dependence on God.

The words of Christ, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name," may have specific reference to His spiritual kingdom, but the underlying principle extends to all temporal good which is needful for us, and consistent with the will of God to give. We have reason to be thankful that some of our requests have been denied.

Then, secondly, we pray for spiritual blessings. This we may do unconditionally, since God has assured us that it is always agreeable to His will to bestow these. We ask Him for pardon, peace, purity, hope, patience, and every grace; and "every one that asketh receiveth." Faith is ever drawing from Christ's fullness. True prayer opens wide its mouth and God fills it. With reference especially to spiritual good, we are exhorted to "pray without ceasing."

This brings us to the consideration of the efficacy of prayer. Some have raised the question, Has it any power with God? Does it secure whatsoever we need? There is a great deal of scepticism on the subject, where ground for scepticism does not exist.

1. Our first argument is from express statements of the Scriptures. Faith accepts this as conclusive. We may not be able to answer philosophical objections, or infidel sophistry. Owen or Tyndal may confuse the simple-minded with scientific facts which seem to militate against a Scriptural faith in prayer; but the religious instinct which leads the unlearned soul to the throne of grace, is accompanied with a confidence which another's doubt does not obscure, and another's denial does not destroy.

Jesus declares the efficacy of prayer. "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." His word is truth. His promise standeth sure. The Christian might as well question the testimony of personal consciousness, as doubt the power of prayer which Christ here affirms. But take other passages of Scripture which relate to this subject. They are scattered through the Word as are the stars on the concave of the night. "If thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye Me in vain." "Ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you." "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall

be opened unto you." "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." "If we ask anything according to His will He heareth us." "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him in truth." Passages of similar import might be greatly multiplied. These are quite sufficient to establish the prevalency of prayer. Even one express statement from God should inspire unwavering confidence, and encourage the submissive expression of every want.

2. The History of Prayer declares its power. God's Word has been verified in human experience in every age. Praying breath has never been spent in vain. We have the testimony of Bible saints from the Church's grey dawn until now. God's ear has ever been attentive to the cry of His people; to that of the humblest saint, as well as to "Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His name." Prayer has opened the heavens in time of drought; it has closed them while the seasons repeated their rounds. It has cured physical disorders, has terminated the pestilence and plague, has repelled the enemy that thundered at the gates, has dethroned unrighteous kings, has opened highways through great waters that the ransomed of the Lord might pass through.

You recall the case of Miriam who spoke against the Lord's anointed, and became leprous, white as snow. Then Moses prayed God to heal her, and

she was instantly healed. Joshua prayed when Israel had been defeated at Ai, humbly confessing his own and the people's sin. And then when the tide of battle turned, but victory was incomplete, the slanting rays of evening about to be succeeded by night, and the loss of every advantage gained seemed at hand, he prayed the God of heaven to show His power over the worlds He had made. Then the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, so the battle went on, and Israel returned waving the banners of glorious triumph. Elijah bowed among the oaks on Carmel, when the priests of Baal defied the God of Israel; then fire descended from heaven, kindled the sacrifice faith had offered, and extorted from the lips of enemies the confession, "The Lord He is God." The pious Esther prayed, and her maidens with her, when overwhelming disaster threatened her people. Then God hearkened and heard, and delivered them out of all their distresses.

So we might go on, citing instances of answered prayers until the day were ended or the volume filled. We might summon a long line of the faithful to give their testimony, and they would join in the thankful chorus, saying, "We cried unto the Lord with our voice, and He heard us out of His holy hill." The royal petitioner says, "In my distress I cried unto the Lord and He heard me." "This poor man cried and the Lord heard

him, and saved him out of all his troubles." Jeremiah, who was wont to dwell on the borders of a night-land and commune with sorrow, now and again turned his face, from which the tears had departed, toward heaven, and gratefully exclaimed, "Thou drawedst near in the day that I called upon Thee; Thou saidst fear not."

Then Christ's immediate disciples, after He was gone, tell how they tarried in Jerusalem, and Pentecost came with power; how prayer opened prison doors for them, and their chains dropped off; how humble pleadings with God mingled with the roar of breakers, and heaven came down to the lone Ægian isle and left its radiance in the wake of departing years.

Then we might follow along the centuries until now, and tell of Jerome in his cell, and Luther at Wartburg, and Knox in the garden, and Whitfield in the curtained chamber, and Brainard among the pines; all of whom directed their prayers unto God, looked up, and prevailed. Or we might speak of great revivals that came in answer to united prayer to the Old World and lingered in the New; of a conquering faith which carried the gospel from sea to sea, and to the far-off isles, receiving its inspiration and support in secret places, at home altars, and in simple sanctuaries in the shade of the continuous woods; of great national evils removed; passions hushed; wrongs righted; oppression terminated; harvests matured, locusts

expelled; and numberless blessings, secured by prayer;—earth appealing to heaven, and weakness to everlasting strength.

3. The Christendom of to-day bears testimony to the power of prayer. We have but to look around, to learn the connection of all spiritual good with the devotion of consecrated hearts, and of the highest forms of human progress with a trustful faith.

Prayer, sincere and believing, joined with persevering labor, has made England and America what they are, and stretched a belt of light around the globe. Paganism mumbles stereotyped petitions and worships it knows not what; but Paganism never prays. Paganism is wretchedness, hopelessness, unsatisfied and ever-conscious want. Paganism is ignorance, impurity, crime. So it has ever been. It was so even in the proud Periclean age, when temples crowned the hills, and divinities had their seats on mountain summits. Then art was a ministry of lust, law the guardian of vice, and religion a gross deception. It is so in the far East to-day, under all the broad reach of Ottoman rule, under the gloom of fetish worship, and on the burning plains across which pagodas cast their mocking shadows. The religion of Christ, born and nurtured beside the altars of prayer, is that alone which exalts and saves.

Prayer is answered with benedictions. Prayer brings freedom and continues it. Prayer dignifies

labor, elevates woman, guards the purity of homes, places the righteous in authority, builds sanctuaries, sheds the soft light of charity, and helps the fallen up to God. Paganism is darkness; Christianity light. Paganism is death; Christianity life. Paganism dwells hard by the gates of hell; Christianity in the suburbs of heaven. Yes, Christendom, in this age of progress, on the borders of the millennial glory, bears witness to the potency of prayer; a Goshen in the midst of moral night, its life a reflection of heaven, and an emblem of eternal rest.

4. I might appeal to any Christian's experience, and the answer would be a confirmation of faith in prayer. What say you, my brother? "I owe my spiritual life, my consciousness of God's love, my hope of heaven, to prayer. I asked, and to me it was given." Another says, "I have been strengthened to do and endure; I have been delivered out of temptation; I have overcome sinful habits and spiritual foes; I have passed through great afflictions; I have come up out of great distresses; I have ascended to the high places, and, communing there with my Lord, my sighing was turned to singing, and in the inspiration of that hour I have travelled many days until now;—all this and far more has been granted me in answer to prayer, for every one that asketh receiveth, to him that knocketh the gate is opened."

So say all who are Christ's. Souls are borne

into the kingdom of glory with devout desires after God, unuttered or expressed. All the interval is filled with prayer.

Unbelief has raised many objections to prayer. We do not wonder; for it lives in a prayerless world, and, being without an experience of the power of prayer, can speak less intelligently of it than I can speak of the topography and climate of Australia or Southern Africa, lands I have never seen.

It objects because of the existence and permanence of law. The objection has no weight. For:

1. God is superior to law. He is the maker of it, and He can, when necessary, interrupt its operation. If it should please Him, and thereby He might confirm the faith of His praying child, He could suspend the laws which govern all the spheres, and the worlds would stop in their circuit; the night being lengthened or the day prolonged, as His beloved sleep, or conflict advances to victory. Omnipotence knows no limit. "If ye ask anything in My name I will do it."

2. We have many illustrations of the supremacy of mind over law. Gravitation is a law of nature. In obedience to it the mountains stand fast, and the rivers run to the sea. But the human mind may originate forces or employ agencies that shall career at pleasure above natural law; as when the train ascends the steep mountain grade, or the reservoir receives the waters of the river many

fathoms below. There are many forms of human industry which are prosecuted in direct opposition to general law; and yet the order of the universe is undisturbed, and the aggregate of human good is greatly advanced. And cannot God do the same? Is man more potential than the Creator?

Moreover, as it is a fact of well accredited history that supernatural events or miracles have occurred, it is not impossible for them to occur now. But it may be that the age of miracles, like that of prophecy, having accomplished the design of its appointment, has ceased; and that God ordinarily, if not always, works in connection with or through existing laws. Yet, in harmony with these, God often answers prayer; as, for example, for physical healing. He stimulates the thought of the physician, makes available his resources of knowledge, directs the diagnosis and the choice of remedies. The sick recover. Prayer was answered, and yet no miracle was wrought. Or in answer to prayer the Spirit may suggest spiritual truths that shall quiet the perturbed mind, and, by moral influences, calm the physical unrest, and so give back strength to the languishing, and life to the dying; and all this in harmony with, and through the agency of, established law.

And so, in answer to prayer, our Lord who directs the thoughts of others, may minister to our poverty, reward our labor, and bring us out of any temporal distress. In like manner He may protect

His praying people from the epidemic, from accident, from death; and the nation from war; so ordering His providences, in their influence upon others or upon ourselves, that we shall be preserved from evil. He may employ the most trivial event, or most insignificant cause, to accomplish His purpose and reward the prayer of faith. He may withhold some mental support He had been accustomed to give, or prolong working hours, and so defeat the purposes of an enemy, or discover a lurking foe. The case of Cowper is familiar. When he premeditated self-destruction by drowning in the Thames, the hackman employed to take him to Blackfriar's bridge could not find the place; and they wandered along the tortuous ways of the great city until they came to the point of starting, when the paroxysm of aberration terminated, and Cowper, hastening to his room, sat down and wrote,

> "God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform."

While all this was transpiring, prayer was ascending from a godly home in Olney to Him who can, and when it is best, will, calm the troubled mind, as once he quieted the storm-tossed Galilean lake.

But even Christian experience may interpose a doubt as it recalls unanswered prayer. You, my beloved, are an invalid. Such you long have

been. For years you have prayed for healing, and it has not been granted you. Yes, but health is a temporal blessing. God has given no absolute promise concerning that. Jesus, who in His parting address said, "If ye ask anything in My name I will do it," has not broken His word. Nay, He has answered that prayer by giving you something better; and you should glory in infirmities also while Jesus is sweetly saying, "My grace shall be sufficient for you." And then, meanwhile, prayer for spiritual good has been answered, and you have even assented to His use of affliction in the interests of your spiritual growth, as when you said,

> "Nearer, my God, to Thee,
> E'en tho' it be a cross that raiseth me."

Or you, my brother, have prayed that you might glorify God in your life. Then you thought of some active service in which you might do this. Your prayer was answered; but not as you had hoped. And now you are glorifying God in disappointments, afflictions, sorrows, down in the world's secluded places, rather than out on the broad fields of labor, and you will praise the prayer-hearer for all that, above.

Or you, my stricken one, knelt with the dearest earthly object of your love, and together you prayed that God would help you lead the little ones bowed with you around the home-altar, to Himself. And soon, alas! the companion of your

service and hopes departed, and now there stands beside the hearth a vacant chair. Responsibilities and cares press heavily upon you, and the weary hours of waiting go on, while these immortal souls lie ever on your heart, on yours alone. But wait a little! God is using natural affection to draw the children into His heavenly kingdom; and He will yet accomplish, by that separation, what your united effort here might not have secured. Trust Him, beloved! He will give you far more than you have asked; even infinitely better things; and these trials along the way shall prove your choicest blessings. God often comes to us in disguise; and as Ulysses was unrecognized at home after long absence in his country's wars, until from the wall he took down and bent the bow which never yielded to any hand but his; so God may seem a stranger until there comes some benediction of grace, some revelation of love and heaven, which declares that presence His.

All this implies that faith is a condition of successful prayer. We must honor eternal truth by believing it. If we are doubting Thomases, we should seek an increase of grace. God will bear with our weakness, and turn it to strength. There is no blessing for the doubter but at Jesus' feet.

Then let us remember that solemn statement, which should lead to earnest scrunity: "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." Cherished sin will cast up a wall between

us and God, through which the voice of prayer can never pass. This may explain our want of power with God.

There may be something wrong in the life; some forbidden guest in the heart; some unhallowed ambition, corrupt desire, or unholy love; some spirit of unforgiveness, envy, hate. There may be something in the home, in our business, in our social life, which God condemns and we retain. Then a measureless space separates us from our grieved and injured Lord, and prayer cannot be answered. How sad and perilous our state!

But if we are willing to part company with sin; confessing it with contrite hearts, and seeking grace to maintain henceforth, while life and being last, a close and uniform walk with God; then the past shall be forgiven, our most ardent desires shall be exceeded; the way shall brighten as we go on; clouds of anxiety shall be dissolved; Christ's presence shall gladden our hearts and homes; and, up that divine stairway which connects two worlds, we shall ascend to God, and unite in the hallelujahs of heaven, where prayer is turned to praise; for Jesus' word shall stand as long as sun and moon endure: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it."

# OBEDIENCE THE EVIDENCE OF LOVE

*If ye love Me, keep My commandments.*—JOHN xiv. 15.

*Love is like wings to the bird, like sails to the ship; it carries a Christian full sail to heaven. When love cools, obedience slacks and drives heavily, because it wants the oil on its wheel that love used to drop.*—T. WATSON.

## VIII

## OBEDIENCE THE EVIDENCE OF LOVE

We now come to a very practical clause in Christ's farewell address. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." These few words, read in the light of the context, may be paraphrased thus, "My disciples, it is not sadness on account of My departure that will best declare your regard for Me, but your doing whatsoever I command you. When I am gone you may expect days that shall be dark, when faith shall be sorely tested, when heart and flesh shall almost fail, and you may question our mutual relations; but if you do My commandments, you shall have no reason to doubt your love to Me, or Mine to you. Let your hearts and lives be Mine, then the way shall brighten as you go on, and you shall share My glory soon." Christ thus indicates the satisfying evidence of their love to Him; the comfort it shall bring them; and the earnests they shall enjoy of the heaven, whence, for their sakes He came, and whither He is about to return.

Here let a few things be observed. Christ does not place obedience before faith. He had just said, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I

do shall he do also." His first word to them had been, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Obedience is the fruit of faith.

Neither does He put their obedience in the room of His own obedience, which was the only ground of their acceptance with the Father. No grace of the Spirit can be substituted for Christ on the cross; and the Christian, beholding by faith the Lamb of God, will always say, with Charles Wesley, "Hangs my helpless soul on Thee." But our Lord states a fact in Christian experience, required in the economy of grace, that love and obedience are inseparable; and emphasizes the latter as a test of discipleship.

It is also worthy of notice that Christ here indicates His divine authority. "Keep My commandments." He who is soon to hang on the cross, sits, even now, on the throne, and now that He is exalted above men and angels, one with the Father, it is as certainly His prerogative to command, as it is our duty to obey.

Let us, then, consider the keeping of Christ's commandments as a universal obligation, and the conclusive evidence of love to Him. Christ declares the latter when He says; "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

1. The duty enjoined. "Keep My commandments." While it is true that Christ, for our sakes, was obedient unto the law, and satisfied it as a covenant of works; yet the law remains as a rule

of life. This is a principle laid down in the Old Testament, which anticipated the mission of Christ; and is often reiterated in the New. "Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice; and ye shall serve Him and cleave unto Him." (Deut. xiii. 6.) "Fear God," says the preacher, "and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." The Apostle Paul, in the very midst of his masterly argument for the doctrine of justification by the obedience of Christ, declares for himself, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," and studiously seeks to guard the church of the future from the error of antinomianism which afterward arose, and which teaches that the law is not a rule of life to believers under the gospel; being a reaction from the papal doctrine of salvation by legal obedience. "Do we then make void the law through faith?" he asks, "God forbid: yea we establish the law," (Rom. iii. 31) by which is meant not only that Christ has magnified and confirmed the law by His obedience to it; but that He lays even greater obligations upon us to conform our lives to it, since the cross supplies so many arguments, appealing to our gratitude and love, to do the will of Him who gave His life for us.

The exhortation of Peter is also familiar: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance;

and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (2 Pet. i. 5–9.)

Again, we are taught that the decisions of the judgment day shall be determined by the preceding life. The sowing here, will determine the reaping there. While all merit belongs only to Christ's obedience, and will always be the object of saving faith; and while our works will always be imperfect and inadequate as a satisfaction for sin and a ground of salvation; yet, since faith is a living, active principle, and will manifest itself in the life, our obedience will prove our faith to others; and the assembled universe will yet recognize the justice of that decision which conveys eternal life to those who have walked in the commandments, and kept the ordinances, of their Lord on earth. And His emphatic welcome to each of His people, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," makes it obvious that the saved will be those only who have trusted in Jesus Christ, and have washed their robes and made them white in His blood; and none the less certain that those who will be sent away into ever-

lasting punishment, will be the rejecters of that only name given among men whereby we must be saved. There is no obedience which can be accepted as the sign of discipleship, which does not spring from faith in Christ and love to Him; in the absence of which, none shall be recognized as Christ's on that day when He maketh up His jewels.

2. For the Christian this obedience is possible. While evangelical obedience necessitates personal effort on our part, it receives its inspiration and support from above. Hence the exhortation, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." In the same strength it is possible for any one of us to do the will of our ascended Lord. If, in our spiritual life, we employ the same measure of will and effort that we bring to our worldly pursuits, we would be far holier than we are, and the world would know assuredly that we are born of God. We may need to abridge somewhat our devotion to our worldly callings; to take more time from our professional service, our political ambitions, or our fashionable life. At the same time it is possible to be diligent in business and perform all our necessary duties in connection with a secular life, and yet be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

Some think that a high degree of holiness is only attainable by those who are called out of the world to commune with God in the solitudes of nature, or in the seclusion of sorrow, sickness, or holy orders. From this error sprang the asceticism of early ages, still continued. But there are many examples of noble, spiritual manhood, which disprove such a theory. We find them in every century. Enoch stood near the head of an unbroken succession of holy men, living in the world, yet walking with God; his feet on earthly paths, his heart in heaven. Abraham was occupied with flocks and herds, and increased in wealth; but wherever he pitched his tent he reared his altar. Jacob dug deep wells that still remain, and his nomadic life led him back and forth from the Lebanon Mountains to the South Country,—but he held frequent communion with God, and waited for the promised salvation. Joseph was ruler over all Egypt; Moses was king of Jeshurin; Jeremiah dwelt in a royal court; Daniel was third ruler in the kingdom of Babylon; Nehemiah was prince and governor in Jerusalem; but they were all noble saints, though they were thus busied with worldly care.

Well did Manning say, "In all ages the holiest believers have been mingled in all the duties and trials of life, until age or the events of Providence set them free. There was nothing uncommon about the most of them but their holiness. Their very lot in life ministered to their occasions of obe-

dience and humiliation. They sought God fervently in the turmoil of markets, camps, and courts; and He revealed Himself to them in love, and became the centre about which they moved, and the rest of all their affections." And so now, all classes and conditions may ascend the very heights of holiness, and reflect afar the glory of their risen Lord. Beloved, there is no limit to our spiritual advance, except in the measure of our own energy, self-discipline, and purity of purpose.

To be in the world; to be touched by it at every turn and on every side; to be in employments which require our attention to be turned habitually earthward; to be brought into contact with unbelief, dishonesty, deception, and all manner of sin; to breathe the atmosphere of unsanctified wealth, of worldly ambition, of wickedness in high places, and yet maintain the highest style of godliness; this is the grandest triumph of faith, and shall exalt to the highest glory. This is to show forth more fully the power of divine grace than if we wrestled with few temptations, and went to heaven with scarce a foe or a frown. And it may appear, when eternity shall make its revelations, that the Asas, Daniels, Wilberforces, and Gladstones, who maintained their integrity and grew in holiness while surrounded by the cares and enticements of a busy secular or political life, will wear whiter robes and stand nearer the throne than some Bible saints, devoted to the tabernacle and temple, or such later

believers as Thomas à Kempis and Madame Guyon.

Obedience is possible for all, without respect to calling or lot in life. God does not require of any that which is unattainable. If we are weak and worldly, living much of the time on a low spiritual plane, with our hope of heaven darkened, and with others in doubt as to our piety, the fault is our own. We do not seek that we may find; we do not labor that we may attain; we do not strive that we may conquer and go up to the higher grounds on the borders of heaven.

3. This obedience should be universal.

The obligation extends to all the commandments Christ has given, as applicable to our conditions and callings in life; to the principles of conduct contained in the sermon on the Mount; to the Decalogue, as He has interpreted it; to every expression of the divine will contained in the sacred Scriptures. No election or omission is admissible. There are some duties which require a greater sacrifice of feeling, of personal will, of constitutional habits, tastes and temper, than others. We incline to the easier, and by the performance of these, think to excuse the neglect of the more arduous and painful. But the reach of our obedience should be the revealed will of God.

In all the relations of life; as parents and children; friends and neighbors; pastors and people; as members of the church, and citizens of the state;

as probationers for eternity, and heirs of a heavenly kingdom; we have obligations which cannot be transferred or set aside. God requires the exercise of love, sympathy, forbearance, forgiveness, words of kindness, ministrations of mercy, works of charity; consideration for those who love and for those who hate us; for those who accord with our opinions and for those who oppose them; for those who praise us and for those who despitefully use and persecute us; for those of our own religious sect, and for all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, by whatever name they may be called.

We are also to glorify our Lord in afflictions; acquiescing in His will when He leads us through the fires; bearing any cross He sees fit to lay upon us; submitting to any humiliation in person, or office, or service He appoints; that we may magnify His grace, ever saying, "Not my will but Thine be done," believing the way of suffering to be the way of life.

Obedience is not always or immediately pleasant. Our Saviour's feet were often on painful paths; so must ours be. He passed through tribulation; so must we. The cloud often covered Him, and the storm spent its fury upon Him; we must be made perfect through the discipline of sorrow.

Hence, there will be frequent occasion for Christian submission and patience. Our Lord would have us lie passive in His hand, and have no will

but His. By this self-surrender we honor Him; we manifest the sufficiency of His grace to sustain; and the power of faith to pierce the cloud, and dwell beyond it. Paul, who received his apostleship from Christ, when beaten with rods; when stoned, and imprisoned at Rome; glorified his Master as certainly as when he preached Jesus on Mars' Hill, or discoursed to the most noble Festus. So also did Peter in his crucifixion, and John in his banishment, and Thomas in his martyrdom; as fully as when the first spoke with the tongue of fire, or the second uttered messages of peace, or the third bore the cross of Christ from Jerusalem to the darker regions beyond.

This, then, is the obedience required. It is active and passive; minute and universal; secret and open; sincere and affectionate; prompt and cheerful; its rule the divine word; its measure the whole heart and mind and strength; its limit the world and the last hour of conscious being.

Notice some of the results of obedience.

1. By obedience, our love to Christ is manifested. It is the outward expression of an inward grace. Life in nature cannot be hidden. It appears in the tree, when the winter is past; in the opening bud, the fragrant blossoms, the matured fruit. It is seen in the meadows clothed with grass; in the fields covered with waving grain; in the streams which issue from fountains out of sight, sending their tribute to the sea. So spiritual life

cannot be concealed. Love will manifest itself in appropriate works. Jesus says, "If ye love Me ye will keep My sayings."

Love is the fulfilling of the law; and a willing service is its expression. Love makes the heart an Eden for fruitfulness and beauty. Goldsmith said, "It shows itself in a thousand unpremediated sallies of fondness." The mother nourishes her child, clothes it, ministers to it when sick, keeps the long night vigil when others sleep, stands between it and harm, and cheerfully sacrifices her own comfort for its good. Thus the heart reports its quenchless love.

A ship is going down at sea. Many have entered the lifeboat, others are near it, struggling among the waves. Room remains for only one. A man approaches on a fragment of the wreck, bearing something concealed in his arms. A voice, kind yet firm, says, "Leave your burden and be saved, or keep it and perish." The decision is quickly made. The man casts the burden in, and himself sinks beneath the waves. And what is it for which he surrendered his life. The covering is removed, and two children, tender and beautiful, all unconscious of danger, look out from their hiding-place. He was only a slave that did that strange act. But his was a love that allied him to angels.

Do I love Christ? My love to Him will show itself in my life. When He speaks, I will listen; when He commands, I will obey; when He lays

His cross upon me, I will bear it; and love will make the burden light.

The stately and gifted Lord Brooks was so drawn to Sir Philip Sidney that he preferred his society to the grandeur of courts, spoke of him with great affection, and directed that, on his tombstone, should be this inscription only, "Here lies the friend of Sir Philip Sidney." So if we love Christ, communion with Him shall be sweet, and when we die we shall desire no higher praise than that we were the followers of the Lord of glory.

Love to Christ expresses itself in words. It says, with Peter kneeling at Jesus' feet; "Thou knowest that I love Thee;" and then adds the service of a consecrated life. Philip Henry said "Thanksgiving is well, but thanksliving is better."

2. Obedience strengthens love.

As it is prompted by affection, so it reacts upon it. Do you find your love for a friend decaying? Go and minister to him. Help him carry his burden. Perform any office of kindness, and a warm glow of affection will thrill your heart. So the more careful we are to do and suffer the will of Christ, the more we shall love him: forbidden guests will be displaced by a heavenly presence, and the circle of our being will be extended that it may take in more of Jesus. For this reason He said to His disciples, "If ye love Me keep My commandments."

Does the Master call you to some difficult serv-

ice, involving self-sacrifice, and giving no promise of immediate success? He would increase your love to Himself, leading you through obedience to a higher life, and into closer fellowship with heaven. Does Jesus ask you to confess Him before men; to make it manifest in any way to others that you believe His word and trust His grace? Obey Him, and your heart shall be enlarged, your soul shall cling to Him with a warmer, stronger love, and a fragment of His heaven shall come down into your earthly life, quickening your homeward steps. To obey is to love. To follow on is to be perfected in love.

3. Obedience proves our discipleship.

Elsewhere in this affectionate valedictory, Jesus says, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Are we Christians? or have we only a name to live while dead? The question is all-important. It involves eternal interests. There is great danger of deception. Many mistake knowledge for faith, conviction for conversion, a temporary joy for a Christian experience, a profession of religion for adoption into the family of God. What am I? Whither am I going? Is my hope mere presumption, my security a delusion?

> "Do I love the Lord or no:
> Am I His or am I not?"

The settlement of the question is possible, nay more; it is duty.

God has given us a test of piety. The electrometer is not more infallible. It is obedience. Jesus says, "If a man love Me he will keep My words." In the absence of obedience, all other evidences are deceptive. Do I habitually neglect prayer, the Word of God, and public ordinances? Do I refuse to work for Christ, to seek the lost, and help on the triumphs of the cross? Do I live an unsympathetic life, leave others to bear their burdens alone, neither rejoicing with those that do rejoice, nor weeping with those that weep? Do I, in any way, profane the name of God, desecrate His Sabbaths, defile His sanctuary? Is the influence of my example against holy living, and in the interests of sin? Am I hasty in temper; extravagant in speech; unforgiving in disposition; uncharitable in judgment; ready to rule, but not to serve; to lead, but not to follow; to give advice, but not to take it; to rebuke, but not to accept reproof; and do I make no earnest, prayerful effort to do the Master's will, to overcome sin, and become like Christ? Then I have reason to fear that I am not His.

It does not help the matter that I belong to the Church; associate with religious people; have religious books in my library; talk about the Church, and come to the communion table. It is not enough that I occasionally have serious thoughts, and hope some time to be better; that I feel far more on the subject of religion than most people

think; and make many resolutions to break off my sins. It does not prove me a friend of Christ's, that charitable people think I am a Christian; that they commit important interests to my trust; and that I am really better than many others who bear the name of Christ. It is not an evidence of piety, that I have much denominational zeal; that I am quite familiar with the doctrines of the Church; can state them clearly and defend them successfully; am able to tell much about the Romish apostasy, to analyze the character of Leo X., and Tetzel, and Claverhouse; tell all about the Diet of Worms, the Council of Trent, the Edict of Nantes, and the Solemn League and Covenant; of which many Christians have never heard. It is not so much the head as the heart that God claims; the confessing Christ, as the living Christ; the thinking about holiness, as the being holy, that proves us Christians.

Try yourself by Christ's own test; and if you have never done His will, may God help you begin to-day. Apply at once to Him who alone can save the lost; asking that you may be born again, that you may grow like Him, and be accepted in Him, when the judgment is come, and eternity stretches a limitless life before you.

If you are a Christian, seek to live nearer your soul's beloved. Strive after more holiness, greater usefulness, and a deeper impression of the world to come. May the future be better than the past,

because more filled with Christ's presence, and more occupied in Christ's service, and more prophetic of Christ's everlasting joy. And when time shall be no longer, may you, my beloved, be received up into Christ's own eternity, to dwell amid His glorious perfections, where the progress of your life shall not be marked by changing seasons and revolving years, but Christ, enthroned and glorified, shall be your everlasting light, and the summer of His love shall reach through the endless years.

THE COMFORTER

*And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.*

—JOHN xiv. 16.

*All evangelical privileges which believers enjoy in this world, centre in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is the great promise that Christ made to His disciples, the legacy which He has bequeathed to them. The grant made to Him by the Father, when He had done all His will, was this of the Holy Spirit, to be communicated by Him to the Church. This He received of the Father. This Spirit He now gives to believers; and no tongue can express the benefits which they receive thereby.*—J. OWEN.

## IX

## THE COMFORTER

As Jesus looked into the sad faces of His disciples, and read the anxious thoughts that arose in their hearts, He was moved with compassion toward them. From the first He had foreseen their present state of mind and the trials that would follow; and now that they are entering the cloud that must, for a season, smite them with its chill; acting in harmony with that principle in the divine economy which meets the need of believers as it arises, He gives them the promise of the Comforter who shall abide with them forever.

When Christ says, "I will pray the Father and He will send you another Comforter," we are not to understand any unwillingness on the part of the Father to bestow this great gift; but that the Holy Spirit can be given only in answer to Christ's intercession, based upon His sacrificial work. Moreover, it is to be understood that, in the covenant of grace, it is the Father only who commissions the Spirit to apply to us the redemption purchased by His Son; implanting spiritual life in our souls, in virtue of Christ's mediation; continuing it through all the experiences of the present state,

and, at the last, making us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

It was also a part of the divine economy, the interpretation of which will be more fully made hereafter, that before the Spirit's special dispensation could be inaugurated, Christ must return to the Father. The High Priest of our profession having gone within the veil, bearing the blood of His sacrifice, our humanity exalted in His glorified person; the Comforter comes to remain with the Church, even unto the end of the world.

This is Christ's first mention of the Holy Ghost as related to spiritual life. We are not to infer from this that the Spirit had not previously been with believers. His work began with the inception of the scheme of redemption, as revealed in the first promise. He came in anticipation of the atoning work of Christ, which was assured by the covenant of grace, and the word of God which cannot be broken. Every instance of regeneration, of personal holiness, of triumph over sin, and entrance into glory, from the days of the martyred Abel until Christ's coming, was the fruit of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. But the extent and depth of His work had been restricted, waiting the death to be accomplished at Jerusalem. Since His gracious designs are ordinarily accomplished through the truth, His greater power can be manifested only in connection with the larger revelation of truth.

This accounts for the comparatively few conversions in the ages preceding Christ. Saving truth was limited both as to its measures and results. It was as the dim light of the morning, and largely confined to Canaan and the Hebrews. There was much in the teaching of the prophets and the symbolism of the Mosaic economy which needed the interpretation of the Cross. The scenes of Calvary and the glory of the Ascension brought in the gospel day. It was as if the sun which had long lingered behind the Moab Mountains, its light a reflection chiefly, had suddenly risen above the loftiest summits and flooded the world with effulgence. Now the field of the Holy Spirit's operation is greatly extended. Pentecost, and the salvation of the world, are possible. The one came speedily, and the other is sure to follow.

A peculiar interest attaches to the designation of the Spirit as *another* Comforter. The hearts of the disciples clung to Christ. They would not have His office of sympathy terminated. His words had been to their hearts as balm distilling from the trees of God, and it had lightened the cross to have Him bear the heavier part. They would have Him stay. So He will. It is only His humanity that shall depart. "Yet a little while and the world shall see Me no more; but ye see Me." It was a great comfort to McCheyne to know that the divine nature of Jesus was always with him, reporting all his sorrows to the human

heart in heaven. In all our afflictions He is still afflicted.

The Holy Spirit, so far from displacing Christ, makes Him a more real presence. He is another Comforter in that His office embraces a wider range of truth; and, while He interprets it, He increases its power over us. To depreciate His work would be to grieve Him; but, inasmuch as He is ever taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto us, He is well pleased when we magnify the work of our now ascended Lord, and gather all the tendrils of our hearts about His glorious person. John Calvin says: "It is the office of the Spirit to make us partakers of Christ Himself as well as of all His blessings." There is no rivalry here.

In this address to His disciples Jesus designates the Holy Spirit as the "Paraclete." This is the word translated Comforter. It signifies one that is called; as, in some great emergency of life, we appeal to another for help. Some have rendered it "advocate," others "teacher," while many think an "intercessor" is intended.

The most generally accepted view, perhaps, is that which regards the Spirit as a "helper." This is a more comprehensive term, since it embraces all the rest. Whatever the emergency that arises, His office is adapted to it. He is our advocate, pleading our cause before the Father; our teacher, widening our spiritual vision; our intercessor, both

inditing our petitions and bearing them on high; our comforter, walking at our side along every darkened road, bringing to our remembrance the words of Jesus which are specially suited to our trial; and, by some promise which shall stand while sun and moon endure, brightening the path which leads us home.

In this connection let us observe that

1. The Holy Spirit is a person.

It is to be feared that even some Christians think of Him as an influence, feeling, or attribute; proceeding from God as light from the sun, or heat from that burning orb. To entertain so low a view of the Spirit is to dishonor Him, and to suffer spiritual loss. The Comforter possesses whatever distinguishes a person: individual subsistence, intelligence and will. These cannot be attributed to any mere influence, attribute, or emotion. He is said to know all things, even the deep things of God. He is the object of reverence, obedience and love. Christ unquestionably declares the Spirit a person when He represents Him as a teacher, sanctifier and comforter, performing offices that belong to a person only, and says of Him, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth in you and shall be in you." "He shall teach you all

things." "He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."

Moreover the works ascribed to Him prove Him a divine person. He fashioned the world; He garnished the heavens. All natural life is supported by Him, from the lichen on the rock, to the cedar on Lebanon; from the animalcule in the water, to the archangel before the throne.

Christ instructed His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The Apostolic benediction linked the Spirit with the Father and the Son. To-day the Church throughout the world, in its reverential *gloria*, is singing, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." When the crowning work of creation was approached, God said, "Let us make man," and each person of the Godhead bore a part. When man is to be saved, each person of the Godhead shares in the work. A gospel without the Trinity would be like an inverted cone, which has no proper base on which to stand.

2. This brings us to the more definite consideration of the Offices of the Holy Spirit.

The promise of the Comforter, as given to the disciples, while embracing the spiritual good required by all believers, had a special reference to the exceptional work and circumstances of the apostles. They were to lay the foundations of the

New Testament Church. To do this, they required an equipment beyond the ordinary necessities of God's people. The Holy Spirit adapted Himself to the extraordinary conditions then existing. Hence,in fulfillment of Christ's promise, He imparted to the disciples the gift of tongues. This opened to them doors of usefulness in every land. There was no long study of languages required, or patient waiting at the gates of great achievements, as in each missionary enterprise of to-day. Moreover, they were clothed by the Spirit with miraculous power. Thus their work and their authority as teachers was shown to be divine. In addition to this, the Holy Spirit joined Himself to the words they uttered, so that converts were multiplied as the clouds, and as doves that hastened to their windows. Soon they came to understand the almost incredible statement of Christ that they, unlearned, weak, and sinful men, should do greater works than He; for the result of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost far exceeded, in the number of conversions, that which attended the entire ministry of Christ.

But when Jesus promised to give the Comforter He had in mind all believers, in all time. The Holy Spirit, who provided for Christ His human body, and endued Him plenteously with strength and wisdom, and every preparation for His work, will give to God's chosen people whatsoever is needful for this life, and for that which is to come.

1. Spiritual life is originated by the Holy Spirit. By His power the soul is born again. The truth, as an instrument, is adapted to the minds and hearts of men, but it must be accompanied with superhuman energy. Without this, the gospel is powerless, and human eloquence of no avail. Whitefield besought sinners with strong crying and tears to turn and live. But he knew that his sufficiency was of God. As well might he have thought, by a word, to arrest the current of the Delaware on whose bank he stood, and send it surging back to its source, as by his own strength to lead a soul to God. He acknowledged that he was a mere instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit; and, when divine power attended his fervid utterance, as Philip was joined to the eunuch's chariot, souls were born again.

2. The Holy Spirit is our teacher. He enlightens believers in the knowledge of the truth. He gives understanding to perceive the truth and power to appropriate it. What long steps Peter took in his knowledge of Christ's person, offices; and work, during the memorable ten days of prayer; and how much greater his advance after Pentecost was fully come! How wide and far-reaching the compass of his spiritual vision! Listen to his impassioned sermon addressed to the thousands who crowded the open spaces in Jerusalem on the day the Spirit descended on the wings of a mighty, rushing wind. He speaks like a vet-

eran in the school of Christ. The multitude listen, admire, wonder. In his light, they see light; a startling effulgence like that which afterward wrapped Saul on the Damascus road.

By a more gradual process the Spirit ordinarily enlightens believers. He aids their search after truth. They learn more and more of its fathomless depths, its infinite heights, its measureless expanse. At the first, some essential truth is like the cloud seen from Carmel, on the far-off horizon of the great Sea, no larger than a man's hand, but as they meditate upon it, it extends its ample reach until at last it covers the spiritual firmament, and pours down its refreshing baptism. How much we need the Spirit that we may find the truth, that we may feel its power, and rise on its wings, above all visible worlds, into the very presence-chamber of God.

3. All this suggests, as its sequel, the sanctification of the believer by the Holy Spirit through the truth. The soul, born from above, hungers after personal holiness, as the child after the nourishment drawn from the mother's life. The great thoughts of God, as revealed by the Spirit, detach us from what is low and sinful, and bring us into sympathy with the infinite and eternal. There is power in great ideas. They have always been the levers to lift the world to higher orbits. Of them, great epochs in human history have been born. They have brought invisible things to sight; revolutionized kingdoms; discovered unknown conti-

nents; opened the gates of natural science; brought the Church out of the sepulchres of formalism and error; and borne the soul aloft, as in the Tishbite's chariot, to the summits of faith, and hope, and glorious vision.

God is in nature as well as in grace. The heavens declare His glory, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. The thoughtful mind is impressed by the prolonged contemplation of the starry heavens. No one laughs and trifles when gazing up the slopes of the awe-inspiring Mount Blanc; or when listening to the roar of Niagara; or when watching the descent of an awful avalanche. But spiritual truth, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, produces spiritual results which ally us to the angels, and surround us with the splendors and solemnities of an eternal state. If we know but little of divine truth; if we are arrayed only in shreds of Christ's beauty, and realize but faintly the power of the world to come, the fault is our own. The Spirit invites us to study the Word, and assures us of His helpful offices in learning the truth, and in attaining personal holiness, which is the fruit of spiritual knowledge. Likeness to Christ is the highest form of culture. That we might secure it was the chief design of Christ's mission; and it is a joy to know that the Holy Spirit, working through the truth, is willing to lead on to this result, more to be desired than rubies, than the whole earth, than all the worlds.

4. The Spirit is also our Comforter.

He certifies to us our conversion. John says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." Paul declares the same, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." The Holy Spirit has direct access to the soul. This is a mystery. We do not therefore doubt it. The entire work of the Spirit is beyond our comprehension, and is, like the wind, unseen but felt, which bloweth where it listeth.

But mystery is everywhere. It abides in our being. Who can interpret the laws of matter and of mind; tell how the ear hears, the eye sees, or the will controls the movements of our bodies? As Christians, we know the Spirit's voice, and we continually hear it within. How often, in the dark and cloudy day, when temptations have beset us, and Satan has wounded us, and sin has broken us down, and we lie, it may be, on the borders of despair, longing after God and quietness and hope, we have heard, in the far-off chamber of our souls, a heavenly whisper, saying "Thou art a child of God. He will care for His own." He is called the Spirit of Truth; for He is the author of all truth. He also opens the understanding that the truth may enter. Receiving the truth we find comfort, and are clothed with strength to do and to bear.

Ordinarily, the Holy Spirit comforts us through

the Scriptures He inspired. He especially loves to quote the words of Jesus, and then unfold their meaning, as in the bow which spans the clouds He unbraids the tissues of light. "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you." Have we not often observed, in time of trouble, that some great promise, which had dropped out of our thoughts, was suddenly brought to mind. It was borne into the inner sanctuary of our grief, and Jesus came with it. We saw its fulness, preciousness, and tenderness, as we had never seen it before. It brought quietness, peace, hope. Though wrapped in the weeds of widowhood, or mourning over some overwhelming loss, or disappointed in all the plans and prospects of life, there came a triumphant faith which looked beyond the night, and contemplated the home-gathering, the enduring riches, and the unspeakable blessedness of an endless life. The present world, with its mountains of toil, and valleys of grief, and deserts of temptation, all darkened with fear, shrunk into an insignificant atom in the light of heaven, the affliction bearing no comparison to the weight of glory; the trial a blessing; the pain eternal healing; the sob the prelude to a ceaseless song, and each succeeding death a higher hillock leading up to God and holiness and joy eternal.

Blessed Comforter! His words are music. The syllables run on like a Sabbath chime. They tell

of His love, which passeth knowledge; of His faithfulness, which never breaks; of sympathy deep and affectionate, which knows no bound. Well did Charles Spurgeon say, "Go measure heaven with thy span; go weigh the mountains in scales; go take the ocean's depth and tell each drop; go count the sand by the sea's wide shore; and when thou hast accomplished this, then canst thou tell how the Comforter loveth thee." Then surely we need not be uncomforted. If we carry some burden of temptation, sorrow, or fear, to-day; our heads bowed down, our hearts breaking, and we see no light beyond, above; no blame can attach to the loving Spirit. It may be our hearts are like the inn at Bethlehem; other guests fill them, and there remains no room for the visitor from heaven. O! let us turn our enemies out, and open wide the door that the Comforter may come in. So shall we be filled with the Holy Ghost, and He shall abide with us forever, the fullness of His presence enhancing the joy of our entrance into heaven, where we shall see Christ, our soul's beloved, concerning whom the Comforter had spoken many a sweet and helpful word along the way, and although we shall rejoice in the presence of Him who saved us by His blood, we shall still want the Spirit who told us about Him, led us to Him, made us like unto Him, unfolded His Word, interpreted His ways, revealed His glory, to abide with us forever; and so the triune God shall be

the object of our worship, our love, and our rapturous joy, world without end.

And now, dear reader, ere the impression of the truth has faded from our minds, let us kneel together and pray that we may abide under its influence forever; thanking God for the presence and work of the Holy Ghost, the divine Comforter:

O Thou who art the ever-living God, enthroned in glory; Thy kingdom ruling all the worlds, and governing all creatures; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we bring the offerings of our gratitude and love, and lay them at Thy feet. We rejoice today, and shall rejoice forever, that God the Father so loved the world as to provide a ransom for us; that God the Son bore our sins on the cross and took them away forever; and that God the Holy Ghost has been our teacher, advocate, comforter, and unfailing helper; enlarging our vision of the Eternal Father, taking day by day of the things of Christ and showing them unto us, and working in hearts that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

Help us ever to cherish the presence of this divine teacher; to yield to His holy influence, and to follow Him whithersoever He leads; never willingly grieving Him by sin, either in thought, word or deed. Then shall the days brighten as we go on; we shall grow in likeness to Christ; we shall help extend a knowledge of Him far and wide;

and, leaving behind us a record that shall glorify Thy grace, we shall go to praise Thee where the remembrance of the earthy life, our fall and our recovery, our temptations and our triumph, our sorrows and their fruits, shall declare the praise of God who rescued us from our sad undoing, overruled all evil to our good, and, by His Spirit, made us conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Christ our Lord. The salvation shall be ours, and the glory Thine, forever and ever. Amen.

THE COMFORTER (Continued)

*I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.*—JOHN xiv. 18.

*The Spirit, in comforting His people, does not always remove the cause of grief. But He draws happiness out of unhappiness. He makes the subject of our tears the element of our smiles. He does not take away the cloud, but He makes a rainbow of the shower.*—G. S. BOWES.

## X

## THE COMFORTER

THE careful reader of the Bible cannot fail to observe that one of its chief designs is the comforting of Christians. God's tried ones are the objects of His affectionate solicitude and unfailing sympathy. "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." He meets us with words of cheer; and, to those appointed to lead the flock, He often repeats the pleasant direction—"Comfort ye, comfort ye My people. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem."

He exhorts us to deal gently with the erring, to help the weary bear their burdens, to comfort the feeble-minded. When the day grows dark about us, and bereavements are repeated, He speaks to us of the resurrection morning which is not far distant, and of the land beyond it, never darkened by a cloud; saying, "Comfort one another with these words."

Especially did Jesus enter with a tender sympathy into all the sorrows of His immediate disciples. That He might do this and assure them of His nearness to them, he had taken their nature, and wrapped it around His paternal divinity.

While He was a Saviour from sin, He was also a brother born for adversity.

The prospect of His departure brought sadness to His friends. He had been everything to them. To Him they had gone with all their anxious questionings, sorrows, fears. He had taught them with singular patience. He had comforted them with a more than mother's gentleness. He had protected them from the dangers of the way. Bethany and Nain, the wilderness beyond Jordan, and the Sea of Galilee, had witnessed His wonderful works; and never could His disciples show forth their obligations to Him who had confirmed their faith, raised their dead, and calmed for them the stormy sea. And now, how shall they live without Him? They cannot forecast the future and tell just what of sorrow is before them. There is a mystery about the hour that must await a solution on some other day. But they know *some* great trial is coming on; and that, in some way, their present relations to Jesus will soon terminate. Hence they are sad. The Saviour seeks to comfort them. There is a "needs-be" for this trial. It will issue in good to them, and in glory to their Lord. But though He must go away, He will not leave them comfortless. He will provide for them in His absence, and that absence shall not be long. "I will come to you."

The word here rendered comfortless is *orphanous*, in the original; whence our word orphans. "I will not leave you orphans; fatherless." A sad

orphanage was coming to Him. All alone He must pass through death for them. But His infinite love will not permit *them* to suffer what He is ready to experience for their sakes. His sacred person divides the waves of sorrow, and they are sheltered from the agony which spends its force on Him. "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."

By a comforter is meant one who stands by another. It well represents the work of the Spirit, or Paraclete. He is at our side. He comforts us with some sweet promise our Saviour left us, or some revelation to us of the tenderness, sympathy and power of Jesus, which makes us strong to bear. "As the gardener, as he walks round his beds, sees what trees are weak, and gives his vines and other trees the support they need; or as the Persian father, in teaching his children the use of the bow, puts his strong hand on the child's weak hand; so shall the Holy Spirit assist our weakness. He takes hold of the burden with us, which we are unable to lift, much less to carry ourselves, and makes His strength manifest in our weakness." Blessed Comforter! How much we need His kind offices! How thankful we should be for them!

1. Notice a few particulars. In seasons of *temptation* the Holy Spirit comforts us.

No one ever reached heaven who did not pass through many and sore temptations on the way thither. There are deserts of trial and valleys of

humiliation between us and the better country. Temptations disturb our peace and awaken anxious fears. We feel the pressure of a strong current which threatens to sweep us away. Our feet have well-nigh slipped. Just here others have fallen. See the wrecks of cherished hopes along the shore! And what, as concerns ourselves, shall the issue be? May not sin, shame, and sorrow be near? Shall the grace of Christ be magnified and our faith strengthened; or shall this be the record: an accursing conscience, a wounded spirit, a lost reputation, and a dishonored religion? Ah! my beloved, we need a mighty helper at such a time as this. We have one. Jesus keeps His royal word. When we are in heaviness through manifold temptations, the Comforter is near. He speaks to us of Christ, and bids us trust Him always. He says, "Your Saviour passed this way before you. Forty days He suffered in this desert through which you are now going. He is touched with a feeling of your infirmities. This dark hour promises spiritual good. From this conflict you shall go up to better experiences, and anticipate the rest that remaineth for the people of God. You are come hither that you might better know your own heart, and going down into these depths of suffering, like men in Alpine valleys who see the glorious stars by day, that you might get new glimpses of the faithfulness, sympathy and saving power of Christ. Then He leads us on to the sheltering rock which is higher

than we, gently repeating along the way words our Saviour uttered; "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

2. But perhaps we have yielded to *sin*. We may have closed our ears against the Spirit's call, and turned away from His protecting grace. Thus did David; and spiritual night gathered about him. Thus did Peter; and the memory of it well-nigh broke his heart. If we sin we shall suffer. This law is not abrogated, even for the Christian. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies. But shall any soul, for whom Christ died, perish? Shall we who have wandered, penitent now, be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow? Not so: "I will not leave you comfortless."

Even now the Holy Spirit, loving and gentle, is near. He points to the cross. He speaks of the power of Jesus' blood, puts this prayer in our heart, "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great," and then conducts us to the Saviour's feet. Now we see the prints of the nails; we are reminded of Calvary; and from the cross we draw an argument for faith which no sophistry of the Adversary can break. "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, how much more shall we be saved by His life?" Even so. The compassion of Jesus guides us, and His strength bears us up. He says, just as we might expect Him to say—"Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace." Then, as we look upon Him whom

we had pierced, we mourn. But there is joy in our sorrow, a sweetness in our tears, and the memory of that hour shall never die.

"In my dream," said a burdened one, "I saw a mountain, steep and high, and it shut out the light of the morning. I attempted to climb its precipitous sides but could not, and around it I saw no way. I sat down and wept. Soon I saw a drop of blood fall upon that mountain, and in a moment it disappeared. That mountain was my sins, and that drop which fell upon it was one drop of the precious blood of Christ, by which all my guilt was removed."

3. Then, in all our *afflictions* the Holy Spirit comforts believers. The Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through suffering. So must we be. Trials come to us in many forms. Health is taken away. Fond hopes are disappointed. Cherished plans are defeated. Friends neglect and leave us. Dear ones go down to the grave. There is no life into which the rain does not fall; and,

> "There is no union here of hearts
> That finds not here an end."

Now we need the Comforter, and He is at our side. "There is a needs-be for this sorrow." He says, "It is appointed for your good." Do not doubt your Saviour's love. Even this is an evi-

dence of it, for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. Remember how He said, "In this world ye shall have tribulation." He told you all this before. You are weary, lonely and sad. But why so much discouraged because of the way? The Saviour leads you, and the end is peace. Be patient; you shall praise your Lord for each step, when the journey is ended.

Observe that the Holy Spirit makes no new revelation; but brings old truths to mind, and helps us compass their meaning. Hence Jesus says, "He will guide you into all truth. He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." When we search the Scriptures, which testify of Christ, He opens our eyes that we may discover their treasures, and learn much of their meaning. Hence it is that a single text may unfold itself in a beauty and fullness that will fill and feed our souls. Well did the royal singer say, How sweet are the words "Thy word is sweet unto my taste; yea sweeter than honey to my mouth."

Then, too, in the House of God, the Holy Spirit comforts us through the truth. The prayers offered, the psalms sung, the messages delivered, lead us nearer Christ, under the shadow of His wing. To tempted, wounded, afflicted believers, the house of God has often been the gate of heaven. Glory has come down and crowned the mercy

seat; and a voice, now grown familiar, has said, "Be of good cheer. I am thy salvation."

Christian conversation is also employed by the Spirit as a means of comfort. In ancient times they that feared the Lord spake often one to another. It was when the two disciples on the way to Emmaus talked of Jesus, that the Lord walked with them, and then revealed Himself in the breaking of bread. Why do we not oftener speak to one another of our trials, conflicts, and fears; of our Lord and His heaven?

But notice, it is still the truth, leading to Jesus; truth spoken by Him; that is employed by the Holy Spirit for our comfort. Every message He utters is fragrant with the name of Christ.

It is a pleasant thought that the work of this divine helper is thus associated with our Lord. He maintains our loving association with Him. We could not transfer our affections to any other. The Comforter does not ask it. He is continually exalting Christ; setting forth the beauty of His person, and the riches of His grace; enlarging our hearts with the sweetest affections for our departed Lord. We love Him for that.

A traveller in a foreign land met a friend of earlier days; and, whether gliding in their gondola along the Grand Canal, or walking the galleries of the Ducal Palace, or sitting under the high arches of San Marco, they talked together of loved ones beyond the seas, almost unconscious of the nat-

ural beauty and historic interest around them, in the revival of cherished memories, and mental pictures of home. So it is pleasant as we walk along the weary paths of life, or through its beautiful gardens, to hear the Spirit's voice setting forth the excellencies of our Beloved; telling of His love to us, and enkindling our love to Him.

We may now know more of Jesus than His immediate disciples knew; more than if He had stayed with us always, and the Comforter had not come. We would rejoice to see His face. We mourn His absence. But He knew what was best for us, and how our greatest good could be secured. Hence, He said, "It is expedient for you that I should go away." Yet He only went that He might come. He is now here, spiritually. This glorious coming shall continue till He come. When we shall have gone through the needed discipline, and learned each needful lesson, and reached the spiritual stature He would have us attain, then He shall appear, and we shall see Him as He is.

The stranger who visits one of the celebrated Art Galleries of Paris, is first shown into an apartment in which are works of the least merit. From that he passes into a second, where are the paintings of greater excellence. And thus he advances from one room to another of the great palace, until the last is reached, in which he looks with deep emotions on the noblest productions of human art.

Thus believers pass from one stage of knowledge to another, obtaining enlarged and more precious views of Christ; until, at length, the splendors of the beatific vision burst upon them, and the glorious Lord is come.

The coming of Christ is promised in the text. Provision is made for our need during His absence. "I will not leave you comfortless;" and then He adds, "I will come to you."

There is here a reference to His manifestation of Himself after His resurrection, and also to His spiritual coming, through the Comforter, who abides with the church. But in addition to this, some think there is an intimation of His bodily return. As we stand on the mount called Olivet, and the cloud conceals our ascending Lord, there stand beside us men in white apparel; and they say, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall come again in like manner as ye have seen Him go in heaven."

The return of Christ is certainly the great event of the future. He shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall see Him. The early church looked for this blessed hope. Believers along all the centuries since, have been listening for the voice of their Beloved, and watching for His glorious appearing.

It may be that we do not sufficiently maintain the attitude of expectancy; leaving the full interpretation of prophecy to Him who gave it, not at-

tempting to set in order the events of the future, or determining questions respecting the millennial period about which believers differ, but so adjusting our spiritual horoscope that we may see, lifted above all the intervening hills, that mountain summit of prophecy, the coming of our Lord. We live too much in the present, or dwell too much on the past. We make much, as is right, of Calvary and the cross. We sing in plaintive strains of the dying of our Lord, and His burial in Joseph's tomb. This retrospection may give too much sadness to our piety. Surely the Christian should look onward. The Apostles wrote joyfully of the Lord's coming. They stood on the hill-tops and looked toward the East. With the spirit of the morning in their hearts, they waited for the eternal day. They exhorted the Church to be ready, not for death; but for the coming of the Son of Man. The Saviour Himself, before the last page of Revelation was written, standing on the margin of the heavenly life as it looks toward a world redeemed, said "Surely I come quickly." If that day be near, may we be prepared to respond, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

# OUR LIFE THE FRUIT OF CHRIST'S LIFE

*Because I live, ye shall live also.*—JOHN xiv. 19.

*Jesus lives! our hearts know well*
*Naught from us His love shall sever;*
*Life, nor death, nor powers of hell*
*Tear us from His keeping ever.*
*Alleluia!*—GELLERT.

## XI

## OUR LIFE THE FRUIT OF CHRIST'S LIFE

If the disciples had fully apprehended the fact that Christ's death was near at hand, they would have been unable to reconcile with it that remarkable statement in His farewell address, "Because I live, ye shall live also." No one on the way to execution, only a few hours at most intervening, would speak of his continued life as a condition of benefit to others. His death might support some great principle in natural or revealed truth, having a practical relation to Christian or civic life, which might be a benediction to survivors, and even to generations following. This was true of the burning of John Huss at Constance, of the drowning of Margaret Wilson in Solway Firth, and of the death of Gustavus Adolphus on the battlefield of Lutzen. But it would be the surrender of life, not life itself, that would be emphasized, in instances such as these.

We have the interpretation of Christ's paradoxical statement, in His resurrection, and ascension to the Father. It was a life into which His death read as a brief parenthesis, and the death itself both crowned Him with glory, and brought salvation to

men. If the disciples had been endowed with a clear soul-vision, they would have seen the light of the Easter Sabbath shining on the face of their Lord; and would have looked thence into the open heaven through which the conqueror passed. Only thus can we arrive at the meaning of that great word which has been a jubilant choral in every followed age: "Because I live ye shall live also."

Christ does not intend by these words that the perpetuation of natural life, in respect to any, was dependent on his mediatorial work. This might seem to be a logical inference; and, accepted as such, would appear to limit future existence to believers, making annihilation the inevitable result of natural law for all who rejected Christ's atonement.

Such a conclusion is not warranted either by any logical process of reasoning, or by the Word of God. The old philosophies insisted that the soul was a unit, therefore immortal, since only complex existence is perishable. It may not be possible to establish the premise that the soul is a unit; then the conclusion which rests solely upon it is uncertain. But it may be fairly claimed that whatever is immaterial is indestructible, and since the soul is immaterial, it is, therefore, immortal. Here, the ground for believing that the soul is immaterial, is scriptural and reasonable. Man, as to his soul, was created after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness; and since God is a spirit, the soul must be spirit, therefore immaterial.

Moreover, thought is a function of spirit. Matter cannot think. The hand may seem endowed with intelligence as it writes the alphabet or paints the canvas. But we know that it is only the instrument of the immaterial existence behind it, of which alone immateriality can be predicated.

The soul is also independent of material existence. What is true of God, who is an absolute Spirit, hence without bodily parts; is true of the disembodied soul. If we were prepared to believe that the soul, after death, is clothed upon with a spiritual body, recognizable by others who have left their natural bodies, yet that would not be to assent to the theory of some, that the soul has no existence out of the natural body, and that, if not clothed in a spiritual body, it can only lie in unconscious sleep until the resurrection. Man, by the original constitution of his nature, is immortal. In joy or in woe, his years shall run parallel with the years of the Eternal God.

In all ages and in every land men have believed in immortality. They may have wavered in their belief, but they have never relinquished it. The ever-enlarging capacity of the soul; a constant dissatisfaction with the attainments of the present; the unequal distribution of good and evil in this life; an insatiable longing to live beyond death; the impression of some mysterious, invisible source of being, concerning whom they would know more, and, in some form of manifestation of Him-

self, behold hereafter; together with an instinct of futurity which no denial can destroy and no sophistry dismiss; all these answer the soul's cry with the promise of unending existence.

All the religions of the world, differing as to essential features and outward form, are yet agreed in a belief of immortality, and the very doubts of men which they endeavor to dismiss, with the mysteries of life they continually seek to solve, are an argument for an existence that might, in some way, be lifted out of the shadows up into eternal light.

Now when Jesus says, "Because I live ye shall live also," He puts Himself in line with the past. A teacher come from God, He declares the certainty of futurity, and suggests the possibility of elevating our present life to greater heights, of enriching it with heavenly gifts, and of ultimately establishing the soul in holiness and joy, where every form of evil is forever unknown. Jesus says, "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly:" that they might be born again; thus entering upon the way to a perfected life in the world to come, and enjoying foretastes of heaven whilst advancing toward it.

Let us dwell a little on these and other particulars. The life of faith is very comprehensive. It extends to all that makes up the complex being of the present.

1. Christ's life secures to believers the highest

form of life. Mere physical being has its grades and measures of continuance. Some seem to live much as the lower animals live. They possess little more than mere existence. There are others who cultivate the intellectual life, and thereby go up in the scale of being. They excel in literature and science. They are the authors and writers of the age in which they live; and push far on the lines of human progress. The life of Christ within us, touches both the physical and intellectual life and embraces what is infinitely higher. It protects from the violation of the laws of health, from the waste of energy in sinful indulgence; secures the highest forms of physical existence, and promises length of days. It enlarges the intellect, aids its search for truth, gives healthfulness to all it produces, and, other things being equal, the Christian will attain to greater intellectual heights than an unbeliever.

The life of Christ in the soul does not lead to asceticism; does not separate us from the pursuits and enjoyments of the present; but subordinates all these to the higher interests of the soul, and, as far as possible, makes them subserve the same.

John Ruskin tells us of a visit he made to a monastery in which the window of each cell looked across an unattractive court into the opposite cell, or up into the sky where the clouds drifted by day and the stars shone by night. When he asked why the opening of each cell had not been made in the

outer wall that it might have commanded a view of the majestic Alps, at whose feet lay gardens of exquisite beauty, he received the answer, "We did not come here to look at mountains."

This was a right principle carried to an unwarranted extreme. Our Lord intends that we shall enjoy whatever is beautiful in nature, and pleasant in social life, within the limits of sobriety and duty. Yet there is much to admire in the heroism which consents to be shut in from whatever is worldly, that the soul may be occupied with the life above. Infinitely better to be such a monk as Bernard, than a libertine like Gardiner; a Thomas à Kempis, rather than a cultured, dissolute, selfish courtier like Voltaire.

But while there are many sources of pleasure in the natural life which, in moderation, may be enjoyed; still there is something infinitely better. It is to have our life hid with Christ in God. This lifts the earthly existence up into the heavenly; the human into the embrace of the divine. It confers the greatest dignity of which our nature is capable. Mere worldly distinctions are small, and so appear, when viewed from the heights of a spiritual life; as, from the summit of Mount Hermon, the hills sink to a level with the plains of Galilee.

We cannot measure the distance which separates the life Christ gives, from that which is carnal and worldly, either as to its nature or the good it secures. It is the only life in harmony with the pos-

sibilities of an immortal being; and is both a pledge and foretaste of eternal blessedness and honor. It partakes of Christ's excellence, participates in His joy, and shares His glory. It identifies us with His kingdom, with all the triumphs of His grace, with every extension of His spiritual possessions, and with the latter-day splendors of His reign; when to Him every knee shall bow, and all nations crown Him their own and only King. Christ and believers are one.

The life we live in Christ is one of progressive holiness. It differs from Christ's life, not in its nature, but in measure only; and is ever advancing toward perfection. It is habitually putting on more of our Saviour's beauty; enlarging its fellowship with Him, in every attribute of its existence; coming into increasing harmony with Him whose perfect likeness we shall ultimately bear. This is the only life that is real, satisfying, and consistent both with the will of God and our highest good.

2. The life given by Christ is supported by Him. In Him we live; without Him we would die. It is well to feel our dependence on Christ. In us there dwells no inherent strength. We have no power to support or unfold any germ of spiritual life within us. We are unable, in ourselves, to resist temptation, to conquer our spiritual foes, to mount up to God. We need the life of Christ to uphold us in all our goings; to shield us from every evil; to lead us on to greater strength; and to per-

fect the life which grace has began. Is this dependence a ground for fear? Shall we say with David, when Saul sought his life and pursued him into the wilderness, We shall one day fall by the hands of our enemies. Ah, no! We are indeed, weak and sinful. The moral atmosphere about us breeds pestilence and plague. Destruction is ever on our path. But we recall the words of Jesus, "Because I live ye shall live also." His life is pledged to support ours. The life within us may seem, at times, to wane, and be about to die. We cry out in the consciousness of a far remove from God, "O that I knew where I might find Him." Our souls are stained, our strength broken, our joys departed. Still hope is not dead. Away in some far-off chamber of the soul we hear a voice low and tender, grown familiar, saying, "In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." It is the Lord our Redeemer who speaks. It is the Good Shepherd who brings home His own. It is He who found Lot in the mountain cave and rescued him from Satan's power; who rebuked David in love, then restored to him the joys of his salvation; who met Peter on a secluded path, drew him back to His embrace, and held him fast; who left the ninety and nine, that He might find the sheep that was lost. Long-suffering, patient, forgiving Saviour! He must die before we can perish. But He is alive forevermore.

The vacant sepulchre bids us hope. The ascending Christ; the open heaven; the voices that speak from out the heavenly state; the abiding consciousness of a divine person within us; linking us to the throne of God; these drive away our fears. Moment by moment, in devout meditation, in trustful prayer, even in unconscious leaning on Christ's strength, we pursue our way; and on the air there seems to linger the words spoken in the Upper Chamber, "Because I live ye shall live also." Christ's life gathers about us the influence of divine thoughts, divine realities, divine existence. Through the truth, illustrated in providence, confirmed by experience, and emphasized by His Spirit, He advances us in spiritual strength and beauty, making us increasingly like Himself; more gentle and loving; more forgiving and kind; more thoughtful and more divine. Let His name be praised!

3. The life we thus live is perfected in heaven. When we shall see our Lord, we shall be like Him. Then every longing of our souls for holiness, rest, and absolute satisfaction, shall be attained. "Now are we the children of God; and, if children, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Our Lord says to us to-day, in the midst of our spiritual struggle and strife, "To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Of all that is embraced in this

promise we cannot tell. We have some earnests of the heavenly life, but they are only as the grey dawn which promises the glorious noon.

It does not mean that we shall possess the attributes of the Godhead; that Christ's omniscience, omnipresence, and infinity of being and glory shall be ours. Saints can never be invested with the prerogatives which belong to Christ as the self-existent, eternal God. But whatever of blessedness, honor, and power characterizes Christ's glorified humanity, shall surely be ours. We shall sustain to Him a relation above that of the angels. We shall wear spiritual bodies like His, of the glory of which, three of the disciples received an intimation when they witnessed His transfiguration on the mount. We shall live that incomprehensible life which our Immanuel, as to His glorified humanity now lives, having returned to the Father. We shall be kings and priests unto God forever.

4. There is involved in this, the resurrection of the body. Christ ascended in His human form. As to its essence no element of His earthly existence was eliminated in the ascension. We need not perplex ourselves as to what is necessary to constitute bodily identity, nor what shall be the attributes of the resurrection body. It is enough to know that all who sleep in Christ shall rise again, and be clothed upon with bodies fashioned like unto His glorious body.

We do not esteem it a thing incredible that God

should raise the dead. The elements that enter into the body, when laid in the grave, may be widely scattered. God can gather them if necessary from their dispersion. Martyrs were burned at the stake. Their visible remains were but a handful of dust. Wyclif's bones were consumed, and his ashes were thrown into the brook near by. The Avon bore them to the Severn, and the Severn to the Sea. But God will care for the bodies of His children, and all who die in Christ shall rise again.

Jesus' resurrection is a prophecy and pledge of ours. He rose as the first-fruits of them that sleep; the wave-sheaf of a glorious harvest. As certainly as Christ rose from the dead, so certainly we shall rise at the last day. The glorification of the body is possible with God. Often He makes the unsightly seed, which is dropped in the earth and dies, appear again in a flower of exquisite beauty, in form and color and life the admiration of the highest intelligence, as it is the glory of the field and the pride of the desert. Surely God, out of the dust of His humblest child, can produce a body which shall elicit the praise of angels, and grace the throne of His glory. Just how this will be accomplished none of us can tell. It does not matter; we can leave the process with Him who does all things well; and our thoughts about it shall not be permitted to mar His work.

The resurrection of the body may be the prom-

inent truth Christ intended when He said, "Because I live ye shall live also." With the setting of another sun, a sad spectacle of death, borne in the arms of His friends, He shall be laid in Joseph's sepulchre. But the bars of death shall not confine Him beyond the appointed time. He shall rise again, and walk abroad, and the disciples shall see Him. As He speaks, His thought has gone beyond the death and burial, into the resurrection life. As He lives, so His people shall live. The world around shall give up its dead, alike the earth and the sea. Alaric's grave under the channel of the Busento shall not always be hidden; nor the ocean cavern which holds Judson's lonely remains. "The night cometh and also the morning."

Then, too, we shall recognize the resurrection bodies of our departed friends; and ours shall be known and identified by the generations following. The Greeks made a vain attempt to restore the Parthenon; but God can rebuild the old home of the soul, and the resurrection will be the complement of redemption, as it will be the perfecting of heavenly joy.

How comforting, from every point of view, the word of Christ, "Because I live ye shall live also." It carries everything with it. It soothes our sorrows; quiets our unrest; supports our hope; interprets death; and opens the gates of heaven, that we may look in and anticipate its homefulness, its glory, and its unending joy.

Since Jesus lives, we have nothing to fear. Come what may, all will be well. If we but give ourselves wholly to Him, He will make our every interest His constant care. Trials may come, hopes may be disappointed, friendships may fail. All the lights of the present world may go out; and life become as a deserted banquet-hall, with all but we departed. But, living in Christ, every event is a blessing. No real ill can ever befall us. The more faith is tried the stronger it will grow. The more we are chastened the more Christlike we shall be. Each grave shall be a stepping-stone to higher and better things; every plaintive cadence, drowned with sobs, shall be a prelude to the eternal song; and all the storms which beat on us here, shall enhance the joy of that life which storms never disturb; which sorrow never enters; where no night shall ever divide the happy, eternal day. Thus interpreting the life which is hid in Christ, we may cultivate a calm resignation which shall lead on to a joyful hope; and faith shall dwell above the clouds, always beholding the sun by day, and the glorious stars by night.

CHRIST MANIFESTING HIMSELF

*He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent me.*—JOHN XIV. 21-24.

*The discourse of the naturalist on his experiments, of the scholar on his books, of the mathematician who is talking with raptures on the beauties of a theorem, will bring things into the presence of initiated listeners, which are still remote from the minds of those in the very same company who have no sympathy with the theme. In the case of the believer, the causes of estrangement have been taken away, a new relation exists, a new life has been born and God is present as a Friend, whose love has been accepted, and whose conversation is understood with all the intelligence of a kindred nature.* —STANFORD.

## XII

## CHRIST MANIFESTING HIMSELF

It is a significant fact that, when Christ arose from the dead, He showed Himself to His disciples only. He had said, emphasizing a generic term which included all who were in a state of natural hostility to Him, "Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more." The literal fulfillment of this saying is a fact of well-accredited history. The Sanhedrim that condemned our Lord; the priests who mocked Him; the rulers who rejected Him; the rabbi who jeered Him; all unbelievers who rejected His grace; saw Him no more. They had cried, "Away with Him," and He took them at their word. When He had risen He entered Jerusalem, travelled its contiguous roads, lingered among the mountains of Galilee, stood on the shore of its shimmering lake, then returned to the Holy City as noiselessly and unobserved as He had left it. The world saw Him not. His very person touched theirs, but their eyes were holden that they could not see Him. It was a judicial blindness. They, themselves, had so ordered.

The promise of His manifestation to His friends was as certainly fulfilled. When He rose from the

dead He showed Himself to His disciples; was recognized by them; talked with them by the way; communed with them in their place of prayer; gave them the commission to "teach all nations"; then, seen by them, entered the cloud-chariot and returned to the Father. Thereafter faith performed and exceeded the office of sight, beholding Jesus exalted in the highest heavens, and enthroned in glory. To this spiritual vision, which shall continue with the church during all the ages of His absence, our Lord had special reference when He said, "Ye see Me."

There was still another promise which was verified in a cumulative experience. "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." Some think the day alluded to is that of Christ's second coming, at the end of the world. That day, indeed, shall mark an epoch in the history of the church, which shall bring with it larger and more impressive views of Christ and of His oneness in power and glory with the Father, than ever before enjoyed. But the expression, "in that day," is used with reference to an indefinite future, embracing all spiritual manifestations of the period succeeding His ascension. The promise began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the church went up to grander heights and broader horizons, and, in the growing light of that new era, continued to go from one high table-land of spiritual knowledge to others still higher; the ca-

pacity to take in the rapturous vision increasing as that world was approached on which no shadow shall ever fall, whose glorious sun shall always be ascending toward its meridian as the celestial cycles roll on.

Corresponding with this manifestation of Christ's unity with the Father, is that of His oneness with His people. The first is emblematic of the second. As believers, we are united to Christ, becoming members of His mystical body. Hence His words, "Ye in Me, and I in you." His life flows into our lives, and we are made partakers of His immortality. Our souls are henceforth divine. This is a spiritual transmigration which lifts us up into the embrace of the eternal. Not that the soul is in its nature destructible, immortality conditional, or annihilation the ultimate fruit of sin; but that our glorified and eternal life is a consequence of spiritual union with Christ who liveth forevermore.

1. The condition of Christ's manifestation of Himself.

The varied revelation of Christ to the soul is also said to be contingent on love, for faith and love are coëxistent. While love is the greatest of all graces it does not outlive faith. The latter will be modified, as hope will be, in the world to come. Yet the exercise of love will be as continuous as our immortality. There will always be a basis for belief in God, and eternal good will be the object of our eternal hope, and love will ever be the trans-

cending element of our spiritual beauty. "Now abideth faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love."

But what Christ seems here to intend is that growth in love, consequent upon obedience, secures to believers the manifestation of Himself. Love is a primary grace. We cannot obey unless we first love. Nevertheless the appropriate expression of love, in keeping of Christ's commandments, strengthens it. Would you love more? Do more. This is an unalterable law in the spiritual kingdom.

Filial love, for example, is enlarged by filial obedience. There was a true philosophy in the ingenuity of the mother who, desiring to kindle the love of her child into a warmer personal devotion to herself, furnished the latter frequent opportunities of serving her. If, as Christians, we perform the duties we owe to our fellow-believers, bearing one another's burdens in ministrations of sympathy and offices of helpfulness, we thereby fulfill the law of Christ, and increase our love to the brethren.

Here is found the sovereign cure for coldness, alienation, and distrust. This principle underlies the whole system of Christian beneficence. To give is to get. Friendliness makes friends. Sympathy knits other souls to ours. Acts of kindness are recompensed by a reciprocal affection. Offerings to the Lord's treasury bring blessings from above. The execution of the commission to preach the gospel to every creature, secures the presence

of Christ through "all the days." This law of the kingdom has been verified in every age; in the experience of patriarchs; of the Hebrew theocracy; of the Apostolic church; of such believers, in later times, as Richard Baxter, John Howard, Peter Waldo, Samuel Budget, Hannah Moore, Lady Huntington, Cyrus H. McCormick, and William E. Dodge; representatives of a multitude whose monuments, reared before they departed, are Christian colleges, theological seminaries, charitable institutions, churches for the poor in neglected places, social and university settlements, and little kindnesses to their fellow-men, which incarnate the spirit of the great Missionary, who in loving ministries exceeds all others, as the heavens are higher than the earth.

In these words of Jesus there is suggested the claims of the present dispensation as distinguished from those of the former. The Hebrew economy was a schoolmaster leading to Christ. Life in the Old Testament age was largely outward, symbolic and typical; that of the New Testament is inward, spiritual and real. The substance succeeds the shadow. The inner life is far more than the outward profession. The soul is a holier temple than that which crowned Mount Moriah. In view of this greater light, and this more glorious dispensation, Christ asks for the heart, and all of it. "If any man love father or mother more than Me, he is not worthy of Me." He would have forbidden

guests expelled that He may come in and abide. It is His will that our love to Him should be supreme; sanctifying all other loves, but assigning to them a lower niche than that all-dominating affection which pronounces Jesus fairer than the children of men, and crowns Him Lord of all.

When a French surgeon was probing the wound of a soldier, seeking to remove the rankling ball lodged in his breast, the dying man said to him, "A little deeper, and you will find the Emperor." So should the love of Christ be the profoundest principle of the regenerate life, ruling within, and manifesting itself in an outward loyalty; the believer ever ready to die for Him whom he would not deny.

Observe, again, that love is rewarded by the manifestation of Christ. It is not to be supposed that our love wins Christ's love. The very opposite is true. "We love Him because He first loved us." Nor is it intended that His gracious presence is contingent on our love to Him; but that the precious consciousness, and the larger manifestation of it, are granted unto those whose love to Him grows with the years.

There is a divine philosophy in all this. Only love, in its normal state, has the capacity of discerning the beauty of its object. Just as one must have a love of music, in order to discover and enjoy the harmonies of Beethoven or Mozart, so we must have an active love for Christ in order to

realize His presence, discern His beauty, and in some little measure, compass His immeasurable love.

So with sculpture and painting. To enjoy these we must ourselves be artists, in embryo at least. There must be something within which responds to that without, or we fail to appreciate the works of an Angelo, a Da Vinci, or a Raphael.

I recall a visit to one of the most renowned art galleries of the world. Entering a little room, where every voice was subdued to a whisper, and every eye was fixed on a single product of artistic genius, the Sistine Madonna; as the deep vistas of character opened to view, and the scenes of the far-away past which linked God to humanity and earth to heaven were brought to mind; the hours, unmeasured, hastened by. Presently I observed a visitor who cast a hasty glance at the painting, pronounced it meaningless, worthless, and, as if annoyed, turned away. A money-changer on the Corso, whose highest conception of earthly good was gain, his coffers stored with Napoleons and sovereigns, and his vision bounded by a few miles of real estate, had no capacity to enjoy the work of the world-renowned artist whose name will live until the end of time. He was to be pitied; and so is he who sees no beauty in the landscape, no grandeur in the mountains, no glory in the skies.

Christ manifests Himself, to them who love Him, and not unto the world. They who love

much, enjoy much. To them the larger manifestations of Christ are given. As we grow in grace, we extend the range of our spiritual vision, as they see increasingly more of the varied beauty of the earth who ascend the mountain slope and reach the summit. And when we enjoy the largest manifestations of Christ's excellence here, we reflect, with gratitude, that the object of our admiration and wonder will always be disclosing some new reach of glory while eternity endures; thus securing to us a perpetuity of bliss.

In the manifestation of Himself, Christ advances from the milder to the more impressive attributes of His Godhead. The former are better suited to Christian experience in its beginning. The revelations of the latter inspire reverence and awe, and, while they deepen a sense of the divine glory, add strength and beauty to Christian character. We receive an impression of natural loveliness from the mountain stream which, leaving the deep forest, winds and sings as it threads its way through meadows and across widely extended plains, the trees throwing their shadows over it, and birds singing among the branches. But there comes to us a solemnizing sense of greatness and power, when we look at the same river, far down its channel, so wide that we see but dimly the opposite shore, so deep that whole fleets might be buried beneath its surface, so powerful that, if it chanced to leave its channel, rocks would be tossed

about as feathers, and cities disappear before its resistless force.

We admire the white cottages of Cardington, and the boulevards of Paris; but how overwhelming, to some minds, a view of the pyramids which have endured for ages;—in the shadows of which Abraham, Moses, Mary, and the child Jesus, may have rested;—towering now over the wrecks of dynasties and the graves of legions which once marched proudly to their death. And how impressive in contrast with the picturesque hills of England and the quiet beauty of Windemere, the solemn Mt. Blanc, piercing the clouds, covered with perpetual snow, looking to-day much as it did when it emerged from the waters of chaos, and, antedating the human race, claimed all centuries as its own.

The natural world is an emblem of the spiritual, and it aids our apprehension of the latter. Jesus drew many illustrations of Bible truth from it. In the vineyard, the lilies of the field, the sunset, and the rock-foundation, He found symbols of the deep and precious things of God. Let us avail ourselves of the help God's book of nature is fitted to give. May we so love our Lord that it shall be consistent with His will to lead us on to higher revelations of Himself by which we shall be made more divine. We should not be content to live always on the plain, but should long to go up to the summits which extend our view of spiritual

things, and give deeper impressions of the majesty of God.

Love is sight. Its measure graduates Christ's manifestations of His glory and our capacity to receive them. Christians differ in their spiritual receptivity, as in the development of the natural senses. Standing at the prow of a vessel, looking intently toward the East, discerning nothing but a wilderness of waves, I was surprised when the sailor at my side declared that he saw the coast line of Palestine and the towers of Jaffa. It was not a delusion; for another half hour's sail brought within the range of my shorter vision what he was first to discover.

You and I sit down with an experienced believer whose ardent love for Christ is a source of perpetual joy, and with him we study the Master's words. We soon think we have compassed their meaning, sounded their depths, and extracted all their sweetness. But it is not long until we learn that he has gone far in advance of us; and we wonder, with a growing surprise, as he discourses of the wealth of some little clause, or some single word, that fell from Jesus' lips. His face grows radiant with the light of another world, his whole being is mellowed, enlarged and filled by the divine presence, so that the great globe under our feet becomes to him only a perishable atom, while his soul seeks a city to come, breathes its atmosphere, and anticipates its joy.

Why this difference? He loves more; and Christ is manifesting Himself to him in a fullness as yet unknown to us. This is Love's recompense. While it increases knowledge, it transforms the soul into Christ's image. It prepares the believer for larger measures of joy, greater capacities for service, and higher distinction in glory to be realized when a few more years shall have gone by. Love is the ground and measure of our Lord's manifestations of Himself.

2. The interpretation of divine manifestations.

The inhabitation of the soul by the Father and Son, is the interpretation of Christ's manifestations of Himself. The farewell address was interrupted for the third time, by Judas, not Iscariot, but by Judas Thaddeus, or Jude, the author of the Epistle which bears his name. He seems to have been one of the silent members of the Apostolate; for this is the only record in the gospels of any saying of his. As Jude had listened to the words of Christ, thoughts arose which found expression in the inquiry, "How wilt Thou manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?"

This query revealed his carnal views of Christ. His mind was occupied with the Master's assumption of regal power; His occupancy of an earthly throne; the redemption of Israel from Roman tyranny, and her exaltation to national splendor exceeding that of existing dynasties, or those that had been the wonder of ages gone. How would it

be possible to manifest His glory and dominion to His people, and not unto the world which, in His supremacy, would be subject to Him? This was probably his thought.

Our Lord does not answer directly, but holds attention to the spiritual truth He had suggested, again referring to the connection between obedience and love, which alternate in their order, as may many a cause and its effect, yet giving the preëminence to love, and then calling attention to the indwelling of God in the believing heart. "If a man love Me he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Bishop Ryle has truthfully said; "The doctrine of a Fatherhood of God which is soul-saving to those who neglect Christ, is a mere delusion of man." "If a man love Me My Father will love him." These two divine persons are like responsive chords; touch one, and the other vibrates. This divine love passes knowledge. Its intensity is the result of omniscience. God knows the possibilities of our being. He sees the angel in the wreck of sin; immortality wrapped in the environment of death. His view embraces all the exaltation and glory under grace, of which we are capable. His eternal thought reaches down the eternal years, and He sees Himself perfectly reflected in the saint. Hence the greatness of His love. "My Father will love him, and I will love him." Then

what follows: "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Note the words, "We will come." While Jesus indicates elsewhere His official subordination to the Father, as a Redeemer being sent by Him; yet He reiterates His essential equality with the Father. "*We* will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

And then, this being so, the Christian is the dwelling-place of the entire Godhead, for it is distinctly and repeatedly stated that the believer is the temple of the Holy Ghost. The Father and the Son abide in him by the Spirit. Yet in another sense all are present. What a thought is this! The triune God inhabits the obedient and loving soul!

On the day of my conversion, when, endued with a divine energy, I thrust back the bolts, removed the bars, and opened the door of my heart, that He who had long stood without might enter—on that day Jehovah, three persons, yet one God, crossed the threshold of my spiritual being, closed the door behind Him, and announced His intention to abide with me forever! It is a mystery, yet blessedly true!

Natural life is a mystery. No one has found its solution. But we do not, on that account, question its presence. So God, the source of divine life, dwells within us. His Word declares it. Our spiritual consciousness declares it. Each holy impulse, aspiration, emotion makes it known. Our

fellowship with God, the faith which contemplates the life to come, the hope which dies not along all the years, celestial sunshine around our heads, our feet on death and hell—all this is the token and pledge of the indwelling of God and our citizenship in heaven.

The Queen of England, when sojourning among the highlands, taking a morning walk among the hills, entered the cottage of one of her humblest subjects, and they two talked together, reverence answering a Christlike love. The poor woman felt herself unspeakably honored. The queen of Great Britain and empress of India her guest! Thereafter the chair in which the Queen sat was never occupied by another; and, as a sacred heirloom, it will go down to generations yet unborn. But when we think of God's indwelling in the soul; the Maker and Ruler of worlds, tarrying, not for an hour, but abiding forever; all comparison breaks utterly down, and Victoria's visit is not worthy to be likened to the inhabitation of God.

Now we understand how divine manifestations are made to believers and not to the world. These manifestations are spiritual, invisible, inward. Because of this, Christians learn more and more of the glory and grace of Christ. They feel the uplifting power of His presence; are daily putting on more of His beauty; are increasingly filled with His Spirit; and dwell with Him on the boarders

of the heavenly state; soon to enter into the full enjoyment of that life which shall never end.

We learn from all this

1. The excellence of love. It is is God's crowning glory; the rainbow around the throne. It is the controlling element in His being. His justice is an expression of His love. His holiness declares the love which cannot tolerate sin, and would rescue us from its power.

It finds expression in material worlds; in all that is beautiful, fruitful, and elevating to thought and heart and life. The arching sky declares it by day; the stars register it at night; the gentle winds chant it; the summer brook warbles it; the bending orchards tell of it; the beautiful glen, the meadow, the little hills covered with green, give voice to it; and so, too, the mountain whose summit wears a mantle of purity let down from heaven, announces the love which shall survive earth and skies. God is love.

2. God asks our love. He requires nothing more. He can be satisfied with nothing less. Love carries with it every other grace. Where the heart goes, the life follows. If we love Christ, we shall regard His will and seek His glory; we shall obey His words and consecrate ourselves to Him, ever looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. No wonder He says, "Son, daughter, give me thy heart." Withholding that, He will

accept nothing. Your gold and silver are dross, your knowledge worthless, your gifts emptiness. He sues for your love. "Behold I stand at the door and knock."

If we love Him, let us cultivate our love. Do little things for Christ, if you cannot do great things. Acknowledge Him before men. Speak for Him. Bring your offering, and lay it at His feet. Seek to bring others to Him, that His grace may be glorified in them. Aid the advance of His Church, pushing out its lines into all the earth; so hastening His universal reign.

Go sit beside the cross, and look over into the empty sepulchre, then up to the open heaven where Christ is gone to prepare a place for you. Think reverently and gratefully of His love which reaches you from His far-away home, even now the longing of His heart about to find expression in that wonderful call, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Surely we should love Him more. Shame on us Christians, if we love Him but little, and do almost nothing for Him. Would that we were more like John, who leaned on His bosom; like Peter, when converted, whose devotion the prospect of martyrdom could not break; of Whitefield, whose seal was a heart winged for heaven, bearing for its motto the words, "Let us seek the stars."

Soul out of Christ, you have no love to Him. You do not care about Him. You hear His voice,

but heed it not. He would come unto you and manifest Himself to you, but you put Him off with a promise, or in indifference turn away from Him; or directly resisting His entreaty say, "Speak no more to me about this matter. Let me alone." O sinner, I am concerned for you! May the Holy Spirit awaken you to a sense of guilt and peril, ere it be forever too late; for, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha—" Accursed when the Lord comes!

# THE HOLY SPIRIT OUR TEACHER, AND REMEMBRANCER

*These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*—JOHN xiv. 25, 26.

*Scripture can be savingly understood only in and by the inward illumination of the Holy Ghost. The gospel is a picture of God's free grace to sinners. Were we in a room hung with the finest paintings and adorned with the most exquisite statues, we could not see one of them, if all light were excluded. Now the blessed Spirit's irradiation is the same to the mind that outward light is to the bodily eyes.*

—TOPLADY.

## XIII

## THE HOLY SPIRIT OUR TEACHER, AND REMEMBRANCER

As a teacher sent from God, Christ's work was soon completed. He was occupied with the great underlying facts of religion; with interpretations of the law; the universal prevalence of sin; the necessity for an atonement; the conditions of salvation; and the ultimate results of His death as related to believers; all others being, by their own acts, forever excluded from His kingdom, and from a share in His glory. This instruction was needful as an interpretation of the cross, and for the personal appropriation of its benefits. His great object was to satisfy the demands of the violated law. The incarnation furnished the sacrifice which was offered on the altar of His divinity, that, consistently with the requirements of divine justice, and the integrity of His divine rule, God might justify the ungodly. In view of this crowning act of His life Jesus said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished."

But although Christ, as a teacher, lays down His commission at the cross, having spoken all the things that came within the province of His min-

istry, He announces for the comfort of His disciples, before the final word is spoken, that another teacher will succeed Him, and tarry longer with them. "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you; but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

This Comforter is sent in Christ's name. The relations of the Holy Trinity are beyond our comprehension. The words of Jesus throw some light on a subject so abstruse, whose summit is out of our sight, in heaven. The Father gives the Son. The Son speaks the words of the Father who sent Him; and constantly acts with reference to the Father's glory. Then the Father sends the Holy Spirit; yet He does this in the name of Christ, or in concurrence with the will of the latter, and by virtue of His atoning work. And when the Holy Spirit comes, He speaks that which He hears. He makes no utterance which is not in full harmony with the mind and will of both the Father and the Son, whom He represents. Hence, we are accustomed to say that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from" the other two persons of the Godhead.

As to His essence He is identical with them, and wherever the Spirit is, the Father and the Son are present. There is no schism in the Godhead. The three persons of the Holy Trinity are one God.

The unity is perfect and eternal. They act in harmony, both as to spirit and intent. At the same time, this is consistent with the doctrine of the church representing the eternal generation of the Son; and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. Concerning the latter, the Greek church dissents, standing alone in its opposition to the belief of all Protestants, and of the Latin, commonly called the Roman Catholic church, holding that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father. The order of personal subsistence being always indicated in the order of the three dispensations, the mode of operation is always consistent with it. The Holy Spirit completes Christ's work of redemption. "Whom," as the Son expresses it, "the Father will send in My name."

The office of the Holy Spirit, as related to believers, is clearly stated to be that of a Teacher. "He shall teach you all things." This promise was given to the Apostolate, but it extends to all believers and through every age. The Holy Spirit enlightened the mind of the apostles, giving both a more extended and a clearer apprehension of the truth. Whatsoever they needed to know, in order to the accomplishment of their ministry, they were taught by the Spirit. Under His instruction they learned rapidly; and, their spiritual power growing with their knowledge of the truth, they preached the wondrous words of life, with an efficiency never since excelled.

As Christians, we are in the same school. The Spirit is our prophet to teach the docile and diligent. His instruction embraces a wide range of truth; and, if we do our part, He continually enlarges our capacity to receive it. The "all things" of the promise includes all that Christ spake, and whatsoever is contained in the Word of God, that we are able, with our finite understanding, to receive. There will still remain much that we cannot comprehend. We shall see only the outlines of some of the great facts of revelation, as we see the distant mountain ranges and not all their features, or the valleys which lie between. The mysteries of redemption will engage our earnest study in heaven. Then we shall know more about the relations to each other of the persons of the Godhead; about the divine sovereignty, the person of Christ, the mystery of the cross, and all that is now dark in the providences of God, as related to ourselves and others.

The subject matter of the Spirit's teaching will always be that which has been written. The Bible is His text-book; of which He is both the author and the interpreter. He will make no addition to the divine revelation, as completed by the apostles. He will write no new gospel; bring in no new and wider hope; reveal nothing, for the first time, to the church, to be handed down by tradition, equally authentic with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The Word of God is a sufficient rule of faith and practice. But it needs to be illumined by the Holy Spirit. Permit an illustration. The traveller spends a night on Mount Tabor. The season is the early spring. The land is clothed in beauty. Its natural features remain as in historic ages, when armies contended and Deborah sang. But all is wrapt in darkness. Nothing is seen save the stars and objects near by, weird and motionless. The hours go on. At last the light begins to kindle in the East. Nature wakes, as out of sleep. Then he looks out on a scene of matchless interest, registered all over with potential deeds, the memory of which will never fade, and never fail.

So the Word of God, the wealth of which is hidden from natural eyes, needs the illumination of the Holy Spirit. It contains history replete with lessons of wisdom; prophecy which outlines great events whose summits touch the throne of God; penitential psalms and jubilant songs; the wonderful words of Jesus and the utterances of apostles; closing with the Apocalypse, with its disclosures of the near and endless future. But the unregenerate man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; and the mind just renewed by grace sees men as trees walking; and all divine truth in dim perspective only, real and believed, yet having but little practical influence on the soul. God and heaven are still afar off. But if we are the subjects of divine grace, the Holy Spirit is with us. He has

come to abide. He has given us spiritual understanding to learn spiritual things, and He will fulfill the promise of our departed Lord, "He shall teach you all things." Under His tutelage we may hope that our going forth shall be as the morning.

Peter, James, and John, who attended Christ throughout all His ministry, and witnessed His glory, understood but in part; the Spirit not having yet come. The same was true of all the immediate disciples. The atmosphere of truth was hazy. Their eyes were dim. Their hearts were slow to believe. Their opportunities were rare, but their knowledge was meagre. We know how rapid their advance when the Spirit came. They were as men aroused from slumber. Dreams turned to glorious realities. Truth extended its compass as the cloud seen from Carmel. They knew more than prophets ever learned; and preached the Word as if they had known its richness all their days. "He shall teach you all things."

How has it been in our own experience? We knew but little at first. We summed up all our knowledge in the brief statement that we were sinners and Christ was our Saviour. That was enough for our salvation. But we stood only on the margin of a great continent of truth; and saw not the broad plains and lofty mountain ranges beyond. Then we studied the Scriptures, divine providences, and listened to the voice of Christian consciousness within; trusting in the Holy Spirit

to make plain what was obscure, and to interpret what was dark.

Meanwhile, we recognized the necessity of being careful as to our manner of life, of avoiding what would darken truth, and of doing our duty, as grace was given to perform it; and, although conscious of many imperfections, we learned the doctrine, and were persuaded that it was of God and not of man. We speak humbly of our attainments. We have nothing whereof to glory. But we do not grieve the Holy Spirit by a low estimate of what He has taught us; and we are devoutly grateful that we know far more about Christ and redemption than when we began.

One thing noticeable in Christian experience, is, that the Holy Spirit teaches us as to the relations of truth, so correcting misapprehensions, widening our spiritual perceptions, and stimulating our devotion to Christ, the incarnate Word of God.

Memory recalls a mental picture of a sacred mount. It was very unlike my previous conception, or any known representation of it. As first seen, the slope was gradual and featureless, and the summit lacked impressiveness; seeming to bow to greater heights beyond. Another view was essentially different. The point of observation was on lower ground, and less remote. Then the mount was seen to spring suddenly up from the plain, its sides precipitous, its summit among the clouds, its

whole appearance majestic, sublime, and uplifting to the soul.

The first view was quiet, and peaceful. It seemed to stoop to the weak and timid, and to encourage the inexperienced traveller to go up by easy grades to where the olive trees marked its greatest elevation. The other inspired awe, awakened a sense of sublimity, and, by its grandeur, stimulated a determination to climb to its lofty height. The two views were very dissimilar, yet equally necessary to a comprehensive and correct impression of the whole.

If we fail to avail ourselves of the teachings of the Holy Spirit, our intellectual perceptions of truth will be one-sided, partial and misleading. Our creed will be narrow; our character weak; our spiritual growth languid. We need, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to view truth from different standpoints; to see its apparent contradictions; to learn how one doctrine of revelation is related to another; how Christ's humanity is lifted by His divinity; how His gentleness is consistent with His strength; how His condescension is associated with a moral grandeur that towers into the highest heavens; how the divine sovereignty is in unison with human freedom; how eternal election and personal responsibility, God's immutability and the office of prayer, and many other seemingly opposite statements of Scripture, are consistent with each other.

Although we may not be able to fully reconcile what seems antagonistic; yet, believing both, because it is written, we find our spiritual being enlarged; our confidence in God strengthened, and our impressions of eternal realities become a more controlling principle of life. This teaching brings Calvin and Arminius into close relations; and both are made better, more attractive, and more efficient in every good word and work. This enlarges Christian sympathy and love and confidence, and leads far on toward the consummation of that spiritual unity for which the Saviour prayed.

Some truths are essential to salvation. We may know little beyond these; and may know these imperfectly, and yet be Christ's when He comes. But a wider range of truth, and a profounder acquaintance with what we had learned at the first, will lift us far up in the scale of Christian experience here, and secure us greater glory in the world to come. Some will be rulers over five cities, others over ten. Some will be as the firmament for brightness; others will shine as the stars forever and ever.

1. Another office of the Comforter is to bring to our remembrance truth we had acquired but forgotten. Nothing we have learned can be absolutely discharged from memory. Much of the past is a burial ground which awaits a resurrection. Memory holds fast every thought, word, and impression, that has ever been inscribed upon it.

God says, "Son remember," and the record is as ineffaceable as our immortality.

But it is often difficult to recall distinctly, or at all, some truth when needed to meet an emergency in life. Our Lord has provided for this defect in memory. "The Comforter shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." He calls into exercise every faculty of the soul. He revives that which is past. He opens to us the old armory of God, that we may put on some weapon of defence we had hung on the wall and quite forgotten.

The Spirit may act directly on the memory. He may repeat to us the very words of Scripture we had learned; or, through the law of association, recall them. He may take advantage of some incident, in itself insignificant, such as the falling of a leaf, the sound of a distant waterfall, a casual meeting with a stranger, a narrative in a book, a painting in an art-gallery, or some providence unexpected, or familiar, to bring long-forgotten truth to mind. Many conversions may be referred to a spiritual impression resulting from a revival of memory. It is not a mere poetic fancy that,

> "Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain
> Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain,
> Awake but one, and lo, what myriads rise!
> Each stamps its image as the other flies."

The reference before us, however, is not to con-

version, but to the quickening and comforting of believers. Still the same law of operation applies to both experiences, and the gracious results in each case are produced by the Holy Spirit. The wilderness conflict with Temptation, which employed all the powers of Christ's humanity through a painful and protracted period, when He repeatedly resisted the suggestion of the adversary by quoting some passage of Scripture, saying, "It is written," the recollection of which may have been aided by the Spirit who had been given Him without measure, illustrates the experience of believers who meet temptation with the same weapon; the Comforter bringing to mind some expression of the sacred Scripture, a promise or statement of truth, precisely adapted to the case, by means of which Satan was driven from the field; for there is nothing he more dreads than the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Thus the child of God is enabled to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

So, also, in our sorrows, we are comforted by the word which the Spirit brings to mind. Often there is borne to us, on the breathings of the Holy Ghost, the fragrance of the garden of spices, and, as it enters our being, it carries healing with it; a soothing balm from the trees of God.

The revived remembrance is accompanied with an unfolding of the truth, and we discern new beauty in the promise, draw fresh solace from it,

are lifted above the clouds which had wrapped us for a little, and, standing on the Mount of God, whither the Spirit has borne us, look joyfully away to the world where sorrow is unknown.

The promise is limited to the truth remembered. "Whatsoever I have said unto you." There is a blessed forgetfulness which is not disturbed. The past life of sin is here recalled only so far as is needful for us. If pride gathers strength and gains ascendency, it may be humbled by a remembrance of the hole of the pit whence we were digged. When self-sufficiency imperils our souls, we may be rescued from a threatening fall by the revival of some memory of sin committed in the years gone by, when natural conscience was asleep, and we relied on the resources of strength we supposed to be within us. A Christian, as in a case of which we have authentic record, may carry on his hand a scar which is to him a means of grace; keeping him in lowly dependence on Christ through every hour.

But there is no disposition on the part of our Lord to open, unnecessarily, old wounds, and summon deeds of darkness from their hiding-places to stalk across our path, taunting us with the remembrance of repeated sins. There is a kind provision in the economy of grace for relief from painful memories which might only serve to deepen despondency, or urge us on to the verge of despair. And it is comforting to know that, in the life to

come, the past shall throw no shadow on the sea of glass. Then there shall be no necessity for the discipline of grieving recollections. The great facts of the fall and recovery from it; of impenitence and repentance; of guilt and Christ's forgiveness, full and free; shall be distinctly remembered. But no humbling incidents of the earthly life shall live in the book and volume of our brain forever.

The expulsive power of holy thoughts, holy companionship, holy occupation; and worshipful contemplation of Christ whose glory shall unfold forever; will leave no room for memories of sinful acts, and of humiliating defeats on the fields of strife. But there, as well as here, the Spirit may often remind us of some promise that lightened the pressure of the cross; some word of Jesus which was a lamp in the night; some saying of His that was incomprehensible once, but now, according to His own word, is plain.

2. The teaching of the Holy Spirit increases power. Ordinarily the advance is gradual, as the growth of the physical body, or of the day. It will be largely determined by the diligent use of the means of grace. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." "He that seeketh, findeth." The neglect of these teachings explains the spiritual leanness of many. Nor are we surprised at the growth of believers who take time, and that habitually, for the devout study of the Word, secret prayer, and communion with God through

public ordinances. They are as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. They are the Enochs, Daniels, and Pauls, of these latter days.

But there is an experience which is abrupt. There have been many Christians who were suddenly filled to the limit of their capacity, with the Holy Ghost. The stages through which they passed were these: the new birth; a gradual advance in holiness; and then a baptism of the Spirit which greatly accelerated their growth, or lifted them at once to higher spirituality and power. Pentecost repeats itself, not in miraculous but in spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit comes as a mighty rushing wind and fills the soul of the believer.

Such seems to have been the experience of the Apostle Paul. He was converted on the Damascus road. When Ananias laid his hands upon him, he was filled with the Holy Ghost. Still there was growth. Capacity was increased. The goal was further on.

Martin Luther furnishes another example. Converted in the cell of the Monastery at Erfurt, he received new light, and a fullness of the Spirit, on Pilate's staircase in Rome; becoming at once an Alpine saint, suddenly towering above the foot-hills of his former attainments.

John Wesley was a believer when at Oxford, and his spiritual stature had increased when he ministered to the Indians in Georgia, but a few hours

after his interview with Peter Bohler, the Moravian missionary, on a street in London, he rose to great spiritual heights, thereafter preaching Christ with an almost unexampled power; and through his instrumentality converts were rapidly multiplied as the years went on.

This meditation suggests: 1. Our indebtedness to the Holy Spirit. To Him we owe not only the humanity of Christ, by which the Son of God became Immanuel,—God-with-us;—but also all our knowledge of Christ; our union with Christ; whatever measure of likeness we bear to Him; the inspiration it brings; and the hope of ultimate triumph over sin, and entrance into glory.

As Christ was incarnated in our nature, so the Holy Spirit is incarnated in the Church. As our teacher dwelling within us, He carries on the prophetic office of Christ, who, for a little season, is absent from us. And when His work shall have been completed in us, He shall ascend, as did Christ from Olivet, and present the Church unto the Father "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

2. We learn the possibility of greater holiness. We are not to-day all that we might have been. Through the teaching of the truth, by which believers are sanctified, in answer to the intercessory prayer of Christ; we might have a fullness of blessing, an enduement of power, and earnests of heaven, far beyond what we now enjoy. Our possibilities

are great, hence the exhortation "Be ye filled with the Holy Ghost."

There is an intimation, in the injunction, of passiveness, or simple consent on our part, as a condition of being thus richly blessed. Do we consent to be thus filled? Are we willing that all sin should be excluded from our hearts that He may dwell therein? Are we prepared, just now, to consecrate our whole being as a habitation for Him? Then we have but to open the now closed chambers, and He will enter. As we make no effort to breathe the natural air that surrounds us, but simply open our mouths for its entrance; so, if we are sincerely disposed thereto, the Holy Ghost will occupy our souls and fill them. We shall breathe the atmosphere of heaven; put on the attributes of a noble Christian manhood; and, in the service of Christ, accomplish spiritual results that shall be a benediction to the world. O that we were more heavenly minded!

> "Holy Spirit, all divine,
> Dwell within this heart of mine,
> Cast down every idol-throne;
> Reign supreme, and reign alone."

Teach us whatsoever we need to know. Sanctify us through the truth, and bring us safely home at last, where we shall sin no more. The glory shall be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

# CHRIST'S LEGACY

*My peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you.*
—JOHN xiv. 27.

*In trouble peace may dwell in the deepest resources of the soul. It is as when a tempest has risen and lifted up the waves of the sea before which great ships are driven as its fury increases into a hurricane, and yet a hundred fathoms deep in the ocean bed, far beneath all the rage and tumult of wind and wave, there is calm, rest, perfect peace, because beneath there lies the rocky bed, firm and unchanging, on which a whole world of waters may be stayed forever.*

—BLUNT.

## XIV

## CHRIST'S LEGACY

I. The interpretation.

"My peace." Strange words! So at first view they seem, when we consider the speaker, and the circumstances in which they were spoken. It is the Man of Sorrows who speaks. Suffering has written its history on His face, and made Him old before His time. His whole life, thus far, has been one of humiliation and sorrow, and He is now about to be condemned to death by the supreme court of the land, and to-morrow to be hung on a tree. What does He mean when He says, "My peace I leave with you." These words were addressed to the eleven, in the privacy of a borrowed room, the doors of which were closed. Had they been uttered in the hearing of the world without, men would have made merry over the legacy the Galilean was about to leave to His disappointed, disconsolate followers.

How marked the contradictions in the life of Jesus. All history furnishes no parallel. A character so unique, His career so strange! Even His enemies wondered while they hated the carpenter's son. At one time He stands before us in a moral sublimity

which lifts His head among the stars; at another there is none so abused, despised, and trodden under foot of the world's great and ignoble, as He. Now He performs works such as no man had ever wrought. Winds, waves, demons and death obey Him; and when battalions girdle Him with their spears He walks calmly through and, unharmed, goes on His way. Again He is the object of charity; hungers for bread; accepts a cup of water from a despised Samaritan woman; lies down in weariness on the earth by night, with none to minister to Him whom none can understand. It is this enigmatical man who says, "My peace I give unto you." Some might have said of this strange utterance, that it was in harmony with His stranger life.

A few days later the disciples themselves could not reconcile this word with their experiences. They believed in their Master, loved Him, hoped for great things from Him. But soon, every dream they cherished was destroyed. The betrayal, trial, scourging, and all the indignity heaped upon the unresisting Christ; His ignominious death, hooted and hissed out of the world by a mocking rabble—what peace do they find in all this? The most they can say is, "We had hoped it had been He that should have redeemed Israel."

Yet they recall the tones, deep and tender, in which He uttered that final message; and each word seemed to outweigh the world. "My peace

I leave with you; My peace I give unto you." Had they known Christ better, and believed more implicitly in Him, they would have been able to interpret His words, and permitted to realize His promise in a peace like His own. They would have said one to another, "It is just what we had reason to expect. His love moved Him to speak comfortably to us, and His truth makes good His word."

A little later they had peace. It was a peace that passed understanding. It was a mystery to themselves, and they continually marvelled. Rejected by their countrymen, driven from their homes, scattered abroad, they rejoiced in tribulation; and when, for the most of them, martyrdom threatened their lives and took them, they were as peaceful as the child that hides in its mother's bosom and falls into restful sleep.

Christ anticipated the needs of His disciples. His omniscience traced all their future. Hence, He knew what awaited them; the trial of faith, the experience of disappointment, persecution, loss; the cross that would press their shoulders and make them bleed; the storms of hate and wrong that would sweep down upon them, as the tempest from Hermon which tossed with waves the Galilean lake; and He foresaw their departure at the last, in form and suffering conformed to His own. He knew their need would be great, and He provided for it. His peace was theirs. Happier

men than the apostles no age has ever known. Greater quietness in trial, composure in suffering, triumph in death, none have ever experienced. Jesus always keeps His word. If we only believe we shall be at rest.

Our Lord, as to His humanity, was poor. Wealth leaves its estates and all the accumulated treasures of a lifetime to those that follow. It would have seemed to us that, in order to the establishment of His kingdom, the apostles needed vast material resources. Christ had nothing to leave them but poverty, and a holy peace in trouble. Yet with these, a little later, were united an unfaltering hope of success, and a joyful forecasting of spiritual triumphs a little way off; the name of Jesus known and honored; at the very mention of which, hearts bounded with delight, and knees bent in adoring love, all the way from the Calvary on which He suffered, to the sea which bounded the world on the West.

But Christ's parting message was not addressed to His apostles only. It was intended for them also who should believe in Him through their word; a royal succession to be continued until the end of time. We shall consider it as related to ourselves.

II. The quality and scope of the believer's peace.

1. Jesus said "My peace I leave with you."

"Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." By this is meant that it is a peace in kind like His own. It is spiritual, divine, eternal. The quiet river, entering the deep, wide sea, is a symbol of it. The bird on outspread wings soaring through the sky, suggests it. It is the experience of those only who have been born of God.

It is Christ's peace, since He secured it for us. It was the purchase of His humiliation, His servitude, and His cross; and is bestowed by Him. "My peace I give unto you."

2. This peace involves a justified state.

Our natural state is one of condemnation. This is a fact of personal experience and of divine revelation. It is the source of the greatest disquietude known to men; the ghost that haunts them; the fear that disturbs them; the galling chain that holds them to the throne of vindictive justice and injured love. Every other form of suffering is light in comparison with this. Men must deny the testimony of their own consciences, misinterpret God and His will, hide themselves in some refuge of lies, as the ostrich, when pursued, hides its head in the sand; or else continue in a state of unrest. Persecutions, afflictions, losses—these may be quietly endured; but a guilty conscience, and a sense of God's displeasure, who can bear?

But they who believe in Christ find shelter, forgiveness, peace. The divine legacy becomes a

personal possession. Jesus says, "My peace I give unto you." And "when He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

This experience suggests an incident which, no doubt, was often recalled by the disciples, when in a fisher's boat they were out on the Sea of Galilee in the midst of a storm that threatened their immediate destruction. In their fear they made an appeal to Christ, who was in the hinder part of the boat asleep, for He was weary. He rose, but to them spake not a word. Stretching forth His hand in the attitude of command, He said, "Peace be still," and at once there was a great calm. So the soul that was tossed with tempest and not comforted, is quieted by the voice of pardoning love, and the storm of judicial displeasure is overpast. The believer is at one with God, as Christ and the Father are one. Then how appropriate the word, "My peace I give unto you."

3. The Christian enjoys peace amid the afflictions of life.

The present state is one of constant vicissitude. Change and decay follow each other in quick succession, and by an immutable law. "Here we have no continuing city." We go out of one experience into another; now at Marah and then at Elim; now lingering awhile at Rephedim, where the channel is dry, then advancing to Horeb where the waters gush forth; now contending with Amalek, the smoke of battle covering the field,

again resting in the grateful shade at Kadesh-Barnea, and looking over on the land of promise.

III. It is a comforting reflection that God reigns. Our Father orders our lot. No event is fortuitous. The trial which to us was unexpected was long since intended. Even our mistakes are, in a sense, the result of infinite wisdom; and events which suddenly change the whole course of our lives were appointed from the foundations of the world. The famine which drove Abraham into Egypt, away from the land God had promised him, was an important part of the divine plan. The selling of Joseph to Midianite merchants, and the injustice of Potiphar, were needful links in the chain of a beneficent purpose. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, John's exile to Patmos, Brainerd's weary conflict with incurable disease, Harriet Newell's early death on the Isle of France, and the setting of Sylvester Larned's sun e'er it was noon, when multitudes were rejoicing in its light;—all these were predetermined by Him whose kingdom ruleth over all.

God uses our physical weaknesses, our financial trials, and all that is immediately adverse, to further His providential purpose. He also employs material laws. In themselves inert and powerless, they are energized and utilized by the divine mind. The Lord directs the course of the winds; and the storms are His servants. The

fields yield their increase, or locusts destroy, as God wills. In view, then, of the infinite perfections of God; His wisdom to plan, His power to execute, and His love controlling all; we have every encouragement to confide the issues of our lives with Him. Reposing among His attributes we shall have peace.

1. We are assured that afflictions are appointed for our good.

God does not work capriciously or arbitrarily; but with reference to beneficient ends. He puts these earthly trials among our covenant blessings. He engages to employ all needful discipline, and His love prompts Him to administer it. The keeper of the vineyard prunes the vine that he may increase its fruitfulness. The sculptor uses his chisel upon the Parian marble that he may bring to view the beautiful form his genius has conceived. So God chastens His children with reference to their good. Sanctified afflictions work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.

Our trials may point to the weakness which endangers us, and so preserve us from its results. Peter was self-confident. He thought he could go alone in his devotion to Christ. Then came the denial, followed by the bitterness of penitential sorrow; and self-reliance was thereafter discouraged. Paul was in danger of spiritual pride. God planted a thorn in His flesh, and left it there,

Thereafter His humility was His chief ornament, and contributed to His strength. We set our hearts on wealth, and God withholds or removes it from us. We idolize our children, and He takes them to Himself. Again, He sees our spiritual pride declining, and adapts His providences to our need, so strengthening that which was ready to die.

The end of all trial is our sanctification. God does not chastise us for His pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. The plough, which tears up the soil, prepares it for the good seed; then follows the harvest. The Beloved comes from the Mountain of Myrrh to see the garden He had planted, and He must needs bruise some of the flowers before they yield their fragrance. And since the fruits of affliction are blessed, the Christian is encouraged to await the result. Submission begets peace.

Then, too, our sweetest experiences of the Saviour's presence are enjoyed in times of trouble. Jesus tarries on the mountain until the storm comes, and our vessel is tossed by the waves; then He appears, walking on the waters, and stilling the tempest that He may calm our fears.

When suffering severe bodily pain, the pastor of Kidderminster had his clearest views of Christ, and wrote sweetly of the Saints' Everlasting Rest. When an invalid in a strange country, where the sea-breeze sang dirgelike melodies among the pines,

Felicia Hemans leaned on Jesus, and enjoyed a rare foretaste of heaven.

So it always is. We may see Christ most clearly when we are blind. We may catch the music of His voice most distinctly when we are deaf. We may enter the innermost sanctuary of His love when we walk on crutches; or, like Susan Alli-bone, wheel ourselves thither.

Our greatest joy may be experienced in our greatest sorrow, and when bending over the graves of our dead Jesus comes nearest, greeting us with the sweet message —

> "I am the resurrection and the life."
> "Thy brother shall rise again."

Let us draw near to Him. Then shall we have peace.

Moreover, sanctified afflictions bring us under the influence of an invisible world, and increase our meetness for heaven. They detach our affections from earth, and fix them on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Richard Baxter well said "that afflictions serve to quicken our pace in the way to our rest. It were well if more love would prevail with us, and that we were drawn to heaven rather than driven. But seeing our hearts are so bad that mercy will not do it, it is better to be put on with the sharpest scourge than loiter like the foolish virgins till the door is shut."

Then too, the afflictions of the present contribute to the divine glory. They may do it by increasing our usefulness, and by making us more like Christ. The greatest works have been achieved by God's most tried ones. The Epistles to believers scattered abroad; the Apocalypse which opens heaven to our view; the immortal Allegory which helps us on to our final rest; and the inspiring records of singularly holy and useful lives; might never have been written had not God allured these His servants into the wilderness, and given them vineyards from thence; and then sent them back to us laden with the fruits of sanctified suffering.

His chastened ones may also exhibit much of the beauty of Christ. They are His representatives in the world, and He would have them reflect His glory. It is His will that we should show forth the power of His grace, and the sufficiency of His sympathy to sustain in the most trying experiences of life.

Let us suppose we are ascending the Alps. Toiling wearily upward, we long to see the grim walls of St. Bernard's Hospice, and to rest under its hospitable roof. The beautiful valley of Martigny is far below. All traces of summer have passed from sight. And now, in this far height, surrounded with oppressive solitude, the stillness broken only by the baying of the convent dogs, or the ringing of the convent bell; under an overhanging rock which is white with perpetual snows, we see a clus-

ter of beautiful flowers, lifting their petals in that peaceful shelter, and shedding thence their perfume on the cold mountain air. They suggest how grace may live in the midst of life's winter; how piety may shed its light when the storm is about it; how the shield of covenant love may protect the soul even where death reigns. We may honor Christ even more by suffering than by service. To believe this is to enjoy an unspeakable peace.

Now when we stay our minds on thoughts such as these; the continued providence of God who rules wisely and well, and the fruits of sanctified affliction, we may not simply be calm in tribulation, but even rejoice in it. Not long since you were worn and sad. But now you are come to a quiet retreat where the storm does not reach you. And although the evening twilight may be deepening into night, you lean on the bosom of your Heavenly Friend, and sing psalms of praise touching His tenderness and grace. Soon, it may be, He will bid you turn again and encounter other trials. But shall you not go peacefully on? The leading of Jesus is right. Leave the unknown tomorrow with Him.

Such is the peace Christ gives. Human friendship may bring some alleviation to our sorrow, but it is always small, and may entirely fail. Then the cry of the soul is, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." We turn from all that like ourselves is human, feeling after a power that is di-

vine. We can be satisfied with nothing less. In the very nature of things it cannot be otherwise. With relations to infinity and eternity such as ours, it were folly to lean on anything that is earthly and transient. We must go to God, of whom Moses said: "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." In a world of constant and universal wasting, He alone remains unchanged. When the voices of human friendship are hushed, He speaks peace to our souls. When the arm of flesh turns to dust, His arm is underneath us still bearing us up, and bearing us on. "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

All human religions are deceptive. Deism, Pantheism, Spiritualism, Rationalism—all fail. They seem, for a time, to meet the need of some. But they are at best but fitful fires that light up the earthward side of our being for a little while, and then go out in a darkness that may be felt. From all these false sources of peace we turn to the true. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints." "My peace I give unto you."

This peace is perfected in heaven. Now we are like people who live on a promontory. And here, as well as on the mountains and the plains of the great Continent to which it leads, the sun shines, and the birds sing, and the vineyards bear fruit; albeit the waves sometimes lash the shore, and the mists come up from the dark waters. If we be-

lieved more we would enjoy more. Far more of heaven might be brought down to earth, if we had only faith to bring it.

This peace is always approaching its perfect fullness in the life to come. The beginning predicts the end, for the gifts of God are without repentance. Through the vast solitudes of space, and through a chill exceeding that of Alpine heights, the earth advances along its prescribed path through the heavens, and toward a nobler destiny. So through the night of human sorrow, and the chill of the world's cold air, we go on to the full fruition of our inheritance. There, the sun shall no more go down. The shadows which fall upon us now, may disturb somewhat our peace. There is eternal sunlight on the other side. Here, though our faith clings to Christ, it sometimes trembles. There, it shall never falter, and nothing shall make us afraid.

Now, how fittingly Jesus adds the words which are filled with tenderness, carrying a gentle rebuke, and bidding us hide in His bosom. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Thus He repeats what He had said at first, and, with the palm branch of peace, waves aside every fear.

As we sit to-day in the shelter of the cross and contemplate the faithfulness of our ascended Lord; as we hear His message of love coming to us from the excellent glory, and witness the preparations He is making for our home-coming; even now the

everlasting gates beginning to open that we may enter; why should we be cast down by the trials of the way, or be afraid of evil tidings? Why not hide ourselves in Christ and believe that all is well? The sentiment of Chrysostom should be ours. "Poverty I do not fear; riches I do not seek; death I do not shrink from; and life I do not desire." His life was hid with Christ in God. The storms of life only bore him the sooner to his desired haven. No matter how dark the night, how heavy the clouds, he was content if but one star shone aloft,—the star of Bethlehem, revealing the way home.

Trouble we must have. It is a covenant blessing. By this we live. But it is an environment only. All may be quiet in the deep dark centre of our being, and there, peace may abide.

A day in foreign travel is often recalled. On the island of Malta the sun shone, among the trees the birds sang, and the gardens along the way, spread out on their rocky beds, were as fragrant as they were fair. Yet there was a storm on the sea. In the harbor of Valetta the ocean vessels were rocked by it as the cedars on Lebanon by the passing tempest. Great waves smote the rock-bound coast, and the sound of the breakers was heard all along the outer edge of the ancient Melita. What mattered that so long as it was calm and bright on the island itself, and on it rested the smile of heaven? So the Christian often lives in the en-

vironment of trouble. Storms are abroad. Temptations crowd upon him. Enemies are thundering at the gates. But all may be, all ought to be, peaceful within. Why not, when Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"?

Let us keep in mind the true conditions of peace. We are liable to mistake its source. Our circumstances have little to do with it. Change of place will not secure it. Wealth cannot buy it. Power cannot command it. The Czar of Russia, in his palace on the Nevski Prospekt, may be a stranger to the peace which possesses the soul of the liberated serf in his hut by the Volga.

The conditions of peace are unalterable. They are faith in Christ, and obedience to Him. Faith is the initial grace. Jesus says, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." When troubles come in battalions, faith turns its face heavenward and says; "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." When we pass through dark places and see no light, Jesus says, "Only believe"; and, confiding in Him, the shadow turns to morning.

With faith is associated obedience. The apostles found peace in duty performed for Jesus' sake. Where the Master pointed they went, though mountains opposed and seas rolled between, or thieves threatened their destruction. It was theirs to do and die. Martineau was right when he said "a great essential of peace is not ease, but strife;

not self-indulgence, but self-sacrifice ; not acquiescence in evil for the sake of guilt, but conflict with it for the sake of God ; " not, we may add, accommodation to the world, but the subjugation of it, in Christ's name, for Christ's glory.

There can be no peace in permitted sin, whether it be transgression of the law of God, or the persistent neglect of acknowledged duty. To obey is to find rest. To do the will of our King is to reign with Him in perfected peace and endless glory. God will render unto every man according to his deeds.

And now, dear reader, if you are out of Christ, may you seek this enduring peace. Conscious of sin, disturbed by fear, and often burdened with sorrow, come to Christ, humbly asking for all you need, and then, hear the voice that speaks in infinite affection, saying, " My peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

CHRIST'S GIFTS

*Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*— JOHN xiv. **27.**

*No earthly life shows such a blending of light and love. Every word of Jesus Christ is an expression of tenderness and a sublime revelation; at the same moment when He opens the infinite to us by His look, He folds us in His arms and presses us upon His bosom. We soar away in thought, and are retained by love.*—PERE LACORDAIRE.

## XV

## CHRIST'S GIFTS

Silver and gold or estates Christ had none; but He has promised to bestow what is infinitely better, saying, with a tenderness peculiarly His own, "Peace I leave with you." It is His farewell message. It is not the conventional valediction of men, the Salam which is empty as its utterance is brief; but the expression of His infinite solicitude and enduring love. Neither is it simply a wish, but an actual conveyance. He gives them peace, even now, at the table. Judas gone; the light of that upper chamber declining as the sun nears its setting; the consciousness of a great loss anticipating their Lord's departure; there comes a strange quiet to their souls, and they feel stronger to bear an inevitable sorrow. And that they may set a higher value upon their restfulness, by associating it forever with Him, He adds, "My peace I give unto you. It is a peace which I only can impart, which comes from union and fellowship with Me, and such as I have with My Father, into whose immediate presence I am about to go."

There is no peace in its nature like this, and in the conveyance of it also, it stands in lonely grandeur, as the Tabor they know so well rose in

the midst of the Galilean plain; for "not as the world giveth give I unto you." To this one clause of Christ's farewell address I direct your attention for a little, in an endeavor to magnify the gifts of the incomparable one.

1. Christ gives promptly.

This is a fact of personal experience for which, as Christians, we are thankful, and always should be. As we sit to-day, clothed in our right minds, at Jesus' feet, we recall the period of our religious concern,—for some of us in the far-away past,—when, laden with conscious guilt, we came to Christ and put in our plea for pardon, based on His promise and His blood. Was His ear heavy that He did not hear? Nay! Did He bid us wait until He had considered our request, and detain us in the night-chill through long and anxious hours? Ah, no! While we were yet calling He answered. We had scarcely knocked until the door was opened, and a loving hand grasped ours, and a voice of strange sweetness bade us enter. He gave us peace. The expression of fear passed from our faces, for a sense of guilt had faded from our hearts, and we entered into rest. He had often called us, but attachment to sin, or distrust in His Word, or some misconception of the way, or all of these combined, had kept us back. We were not straitened in Him. Hence, the moment we came, we found an open door, a cordial greeting, and that restfulness which only Jesus can give.

Moreover, that experience of His promptness to give has been often repeated. His first gift was like the beginning of a golden chain which was succeeded by other and larger links, and, while continually receiving, we were always keeping what we had. We have never known a want which, if we asked, He did not promptly supply. If we have ever suffered from protracted hunger or thirst; if we have grown weak and weary; if we have walked in darkness and seen no light, the fault has been our own. We did not avail ourselves of the provision He had made; for, commiserating our need, He was continually saying, "Eat O friends; drink yea drink abundantly, O my beloved;" and He encouraged trust by suggesting the past, "I gave Ethiopia and Seba for thee."

Truly did He say, "Not as the world giveth give I unto you." Yonder is a group of men standing at the gate of Windsor Castle; some great, and others humble; some the subjects of the Queen, others from the kingdoms beyond the channel, or the seas. The hours pass on. The sun is mounting higher in the brazen sky. Still admittance is delayed. The Lord Mayor, and the Dean of Westminster, and a representative of the Sublime Porte, must wait as do meaner men, and all doubtful as to the result.

Across the channel a noble Queen intercedes in behalf of men who have offended the crown; and

the sterner king at last consents to forgive the culprits on condition that they come to him with ropes around their necks, expressing thus their guilt and desert of ignominious death. And as I look on these two scenes they suggest, by contrast, the King of kings who says "not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

But are there no delays in the bestowment of spiritual blessings? Not if we seek them aright. Iniquity in the heart will inevitably close the channels of grace; or if we ask from improper motives we shall not receive. But never did a penitent seek Christ in vain, or a returning prodigal fail to meet his Lord in the way. Not down the future, at some unseen turn in the road, is the house of mercy; but near by, for those who are willing to enter it; and at the gate the Saviour watches, saying, "Behold I have set before you an open door and no man can shut it." "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

2. Christ gives efficaciously. The world may be kindly disposed, and yet unable to give; or its ministry may be ineffective. It was a sad sight, a human dwelling swept away by the flood, cries for help and exclamations of despair coming from the struggling wreck, dipping now and then beneath the swift current, and not one of this sympathizing multitude along the shore able to succor mother and babes from dread disaster and watery graves. But Jesus has all power. His sympathy expresses

itself in effective deeds. As He spake but a word and it carried life to the dead, or calmed the waves, or multiplied the scanty supply that multitudes might be fed; so He meets spiritual needs with efficient grace. He gives pardon, and believers are at one with God; He gives the Holy Spirit, and they grow like Himself; He pronounces His benediction, and there comes to them a great calm; He imparts strength, and they do whatsoever He bids; He gives the cloudy pillar for a guide, and they traverse pathless deserts, pass through the channels of Jordan, and enter heaven. His gifts carry infinite potency with them, for they possess the nature of the giver.

The history of the church furnishes confirmation of this on every page. Receiving from God's fullness, multitudes have accomplished impossible things; for they have passed beyond the limitations of nature into a diviner realm where they wrought in the power of God. Through faith Abraham became an example of obedience for all the generations following. The sublimest man of that distant age, the kings of Sodom deserve no mention in comparison with him and receive none, except when their paths cross his. And on the plains of Mamre, communing with God; or at Bethel, contemplating a heavenly country; or on Mt. Moriah, beside the altar of wood, willing to die in Isaac's death, he stands before our mental vision an illustration of the efficacy of God's grace, by which a

trembling soul is made a towering saint, observed of all the ages.

Moses was a man of like weakness with ourselves. But Jehovah-Jesus tabernacled with him. Then the very rod he held in his hand controlled the elements, divided the seas, and clave the rocks. He opened his lips, and divine words carried divine power with them. He went into the very council chamber of heaven, and returning, revealed God's will to men. From the house of bondage, by the way of the Red Sea and the wilderness, he walked a mighty prince; standing at last in the sublimity of unwavering trust on Mt. Pisgah, lifting thence his pilgrim feet to plant them on the street of gold. And time would fail us to tell of Peter, who once quailed before a damsel's gaze, and afterward, through Christ, became a bold defender of the truth before kings, and confronted death without a tremor, though it came in the form of an inverted cross; or to speak of Paul at Cæsarea, on Mars' Hill, and at Rome, declaring salvation by the cross, and sealing his testimony with his blood on the old Ostian road; or of John walking softly with Christ, speaking brave words for Him in the very shadow of Diana's temple, and hiding in His bosom in the loneliness of Patmos, going thence into heaven; or even to repeat the names of men who, since Revelation closed, abode in restfulness when storms were abroad, gained the ascendency over sin, went up to the summits of holy com-

munion, and died in the triumphs of faith—all through the efficacious grace of Christ who said, "Not as the world giveth give I unto you."

3. Christ gives abundantly. The world's gifts are meagre and few. The world is selfish. When it gives, it is with the expectation of a return; and, distrustful because unworthy of trust, it doles out its gifts with a sparing hand. The charity which ministers to suffering is ordinarily Christian. The John Falks, Immanuel Wicherns, and George Müllers of all the ages, have received the spirit of Christ and wrought in His name.

The world recompenses labor, and yet its rewards, viewed in the light of another world, are scarce deserving the name. What are wealth, position, and power, to men passing to eternity? How much happier think you is the millionaire than the peasant? the president than the treasury clerk? Then too if the world gives one good, it denies another. Its benevolence expends itself along a single channel; or, at most, embraces a narrow compass. It gives Samuel Johnson a name which all revere, but assigns him lodgings on an attic, and harasses him with perpetual debts. It makes Beaconfield prime minister of England, then suffers him to be hunted out of the world as if he were a beast of prey.

But Jesus gives abundantly. In Him, and for us, all fullness dwells. If we are Christians, our heritage embraces earth and heaven. No good

thing does God withhold from them that walk uprightly. He sends us rain and fruitful seasons, and fills our hearts with food and gladness. For us He made the sun to reveal our homeward passage, and the lesser lights to relieve the night. For us He spread the beautiful landscape, set the mountains in their places, and bounded all with the azure sky; giving to the humblest of us a propriety in these equal to that of the greatest. His exuberant bounty crowns our years with goodness, and His going before drops fatness. He even grants when He denies, and gives when He takes away.

Then, as respects spiritual blessings, all things are ours. Peace embraces every good. It is like the holiness of God, which is not an attribute, but the sum of divine perfections. Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. From His fullness we all receive, and grace for grace. He came into the world that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. He descended to our poverty that He might lift us up to His infinite wealth. All His providences work together for our good. All earthly powers are nursing fathers or nursing mothers to the church. All the appointments of His house have reference to our good; and the ministry are our servants for Jesus' sake. Listen, beloved, how blessed and far-reaching the word, "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world,

or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." "For not as the world giveth give I unto you."

4. Christ gives continuously. The world's benevolence is at best spasmodic. It may start us on our journey, and then, when robbed and wounded, like Priest and Levite it may pass us unfeelingly by. It may also deify a favorite, making his march through the land an imperial pageant, and then a little later cast him off with loathing. But if love do not turn to hate, beneficence may be followed by indifference; a desert stretch beyond the grateful Elim. The world's gifts are like the tide, which flows only to ebb; or as the summer trees, which bloom but to wither and die. It is not so with Christ. His gifts come to us in a continuous flow. The first is prophetic of all the rest. It is like the gateway to Oriental gardens, trees and flowers extending thence in long perspective far beyond the range of human sight. A thoughtless word, an inconsiderate act, or a misinterpreted look, may break the friendship we thought enduring. But nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ. Whether we wake or sleep, whether we labor or rest, whether we live or die, Jesus' gifts continually crowd upon each other, as the waves of the sea. We may forget Him, but He will never be unmindful of us. We may wander from Him, but His hand will bring us back. We may give our hearts to other lovers, but He

will again win an entrance, gently saying, "Behold I stand at the door and knock."

Our wants are ever recurring. The supply of yesterday only met yesterday's needs. To-day our emptiness appeals to His fullness, and lo! our cup runneth over. He does not anticipate, but He always provides. Never has He failed to keep His royal word, "As thy day so thy strength shall be." "Even down to old age I am He; and to hoary hairs I will carry thee."

You go to the land called holy, and urge your way toward the Jordan. Beyond the barren hills you have crossed there once stood the city of palm trees. Its walls were high, its gates were strong, and its long avenues were lined with the dwellings of the great and the cottages of the humble. Here were jostling multitudes crowding the market-places. Yonder, sympathizing men dropped their alms into Bartimeus' hand, and further on, the oppressed quarrelled with Zaccheus the tax-gatherer. But the glory has long since departed, and where stood the once populous city there is now a lonely tower, from which you look out on a desolate plain, the stillness broken only by the tread of some marauding Bedouin, or the mournful cooing of the turtle dove. You pass thence to the Jordan, and lo! it is unchanged, amid universal decay it is flowing down the old channel, and looking just as it did when Israel crossed it, or Jesus lingered by its shore, suggesting the ever flowing bounty of

Christ, and His own memorable saying, "Not as the world giveth give I unto you."

5. Christ gives eternally. Not only does His beneficence reach through all our earthly stay, but on through the endless years. The world may serve us while we live. It may even grant us a posthumous fame. But its meagre gifts are eventually withdrawn. It has never discovered a passage across the boundary of time, nor cared to extend its ministry beyond it. It can only give a sepulchre, and mark it with a perishable stone. The old philosophies ministered to the religious life. They did something to elevate men's thoughts, enlarge their being, and support them in trouble. But, at death, they and their disciples parted company; and the latter, unattended, groped their way into the mysterious beyond. Modern infidelity has given to men a temporary quiet by veiling futurity, and setting false lights along the way; but it has only aggravated the horrors of dissolution, and, with rough hand, thrust the soul into a yawning abyss.

But the gifts of God are without repentance. The immutable giver never changes His mind. Hence, if He chooses us as His friends, He unites us to Himself by His own eternity. The fullness of blessing is reserved for the life to come. He gives now as we can bear. Then, our capacities shall be immeasurably enlarged, and His bounty correspondingly increased. When we shall have gone home, the Saviour meeting us at the gate shall

say to each of us, "Thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine." We shall not only behold His glory, but we shall enter into it, and abide. Standing amid the radiancy of the heavenly life, Jesus shall keep His word, "Thy sun shall no more go down." Led by His own hand to the fountains of living waters, we shall drink and thirst no more. Seated with Him, clothed in the white linen of His saints, our garments shall never wear out, and sin shall never pollute them with its touch. Possessors of a kingdom, our title to it shall never be questioned; and our propriety in it shall never end. Christ's divinity, having embraced our humanity, has lifted it up into his own eternity; and the infinite sacrifice of Calvary has purchased for us all the wealth of the world on high. And even now, as with these dim eyes we contemplate that which awaits us, we can say with David who, from the slopes of Zion, gazed into heaven; "In Thy presence is fullness of joy, and at Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." Ah, well did Jesus say, "Not as the world giveth give I unto you."

And now, to conclude, let me suggest, that Christians should be comforted. Having directed the attention of His disciples to the fullness of His bounty, and the glory reserved for them, Jesus added this tender word, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." The lesson He would have us draw from His affectionate farewell

is one of quiet trust. Jesus is always present, and ever caring for us. No matter how humble we are, how imperfect and unworthy, His heart is set upon us as if we were equal to the angels, and as the hours go by, and the days drop from the calendar of the year, He is always sitting at the loom of His providence, arranging the threads, casting the shuttle, and so employing our affections and our joys, that they shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Then surely our minds should be at rest. Let troubles come, plans be thwarted, projects crossed. Let disease weaken, violence smite, persecutions crowd upon us. Let the dearest relationships of life be severed, friend after friend depart, and funeral dirges fill the air. Yet, since Christ is our refuge, we should not complain. Let us wipe away our tears that we may see His face; and lean on His arm that we may have the support of His power; and bend our wills that we may rest in His bosom.

It is often otherwise. Jesus has occasion to say to us, as Jonadab said to Amnon, "Why art thou lean from day to day, being the king's son?" Why have we so little faith, and trust, and holy quietness, on the way to God; since Christ's resources are infinite, and His grace is free?

Many, in these latter days, have known the restfulness of implicit trust, as did Isaac Watts, who could say, "I thank God I can lie down with com-

fort at night, not being solicitous whether I wake in this world or the next;" as did pious Livingstone, amid the jungles of Africa, who, with a cheery voice bade his servant depart, even when night and pain were come, longing to be alone with Jesus; as did certain occupants of the Tower of London, who, persecuted for righteousness' sake, were happy, having received this message from Him whom they loved, "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

Soul out of Christ, a word to you! The inheritance of the believer may be yours. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Trust in Him. Confess Him before men. Walk in His steps. Then shall you know the peace which passeth understanding. May the Holy Spirit help you now to believe and obey; that you may learn the fullness of Christ, and live forever.

# CHRIST'S RETURN TO THE FATHER AN OCCASION OF REJOICING

*Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.*—JOHN xiv. 28, 29.

*Through the open gates, up the golden streets the triumphal procession sweeps, while all heaven rings with joyful acclamations, till the man who was crowned with thorns—the man who was spit upon and buffeted—the man who was scourged and crucified, takes His place at the right hand of the Majesty on high, henceforth to wear on that once thorn-crowned brow the diadem which becomes the Sovereign of all the worlds, and that nail-pierced hand to wield the rod of power—the sceptre of universal dominion.*—REV. WM. LANDELS.

## XVI

## CHRIST'S RETURN TO THE FATHER AN OCCASION OF REJOICING

THERE is a noticeable delicacy in the terms Christ employs to indicate His death. The disciples could not have borne any reference to His crucifixion. To have put their fears into words would have greatly intensified their pain. Hence Christ makes no allusion to the cross. He leads their thoughts beyond it, to His return to the happier world whence He came.

There is an art in putting things we do well to study. When Paul wrote to the Philippians, the shadow of the executioner's block even then on his path, he spake not of his cruel taking off, but of his departure to be with Christ. When the pious Scot, fitly described in the Cotter's Saturday Night, closed the well-worn Bible, uttered his last Amen, and was borne to the churchyard; his family said, "he had gone away." Beautiful description of the earth-leaving and the home-going.

Then, too, our Saviour had intimated that the going away would be a preparation for His return. The sun of His earthly life, about to set, will rise

again in greater splendor; and these disciples shall enjoy the light and share the glory. They had heard Him say, "I go away, and come again unto you." Their thoughts dwell only on the going. He would have them think of the "coming in power and in glory."

Moreover, Christ had spoken of His going so that they might in some measure be prepared for it, and not stagger with unbelief under an unexpected loss; their faith in Him meanwhile supporting them in their sorrow by the remembrance that His omniscience had foretold it. He led them into the subdued and solemn twilight, that they might enter more quietly into the night, carrying with them the confident hope of a morning of joy whose sun shall never go down. In all that, Christ's love found expression.

Then what a field of thought is opened by the words that follow. "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father." The disciples might have asked, "Is not our own sorrow a token of love? Is it not the depth and tenderness of our affection for our Lord that makes His departure from us a crushing blow? What at all befitting so sad an event as memory and tears?"

When our loved ones die in the Lord, we fall into the same error. The ancient Church sang the "Te Deum Laudamus" at the funerals of the saints. They thought it a time to praise God who had given believers the victory over sin and their

last enemy, and had put on their heads the fadeless crown. Why should we wear the scarf of mourning, and the weeds of widowhood, in memory of our departed friends; and go weeping through all the days, while angels are singing the glad welcome home, and heaven is laying its treasures at their feet?

When we come, for example, to the Memorial Supper, our thoughts naturally turn to the cross. We call up the tragic scene of Calvary; listen to the sound of hammers driving the nails; see the crown of thorns piercing the sacred brow; hear the agonizing cry of the crucified Redeemer; bow in the darkness of an unnatural night; while the earth rocks and rends, and the universe seems on the verge of chaos. But let not this be the exclusive subject of mediation. Hear we not the voice of Jesus when we sit beside the now empty cross, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father."

Let us notice some special reasons for rejoicing in Christ's departure.

1. It terminated the period of His humiliation. The glory of His divine nature had been veiled ever since its union with the babe in Bethlehem. The nation, to which in His humanity He belonged, knew Him not. They had not penetrated the outward human form, and beheld the Shekinah within. They turned their faces from Him. He was the object of their contumely, cruelty and scorn. He

was subject to the miseries of this life; to hunger, thirst, weariness, poverty, bereavement, and the pains of the cross, and, after all this, to the impotency of the grave.

Shall we not rejoice that He who was reviled, persecuted, and slain, has ascended to the Father? Recall the inspired description of that return. The angels came to meet Him in His home-passage; a heavenly host, great as that which heralded His birth, hovering by night over the Bethlehem plain. And as they, returning, approach the metropolis of the universe, far above these visible heavens, they shout their command to the everlasting gates, "Be lifted up that the King of Glory may come in;" and amid the joyful acclamations of the waiting multitude which no man can number, the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty in battle, goes triumphantly in.

For three and thirty years, according to our measurement of time, He had been absent. Scarce any report has come to that upper world except such as told of His suffering, sorrow and shame. Now His work is accomplished. He has returned bearing captivity captive. Heaven extends its boundary line that it may add another province to its possessions, and the already glorified saints, trophies of the Saviour's grace, a part of the great company of the redeemed, listen with joyfulness to the steps of countless millions coming after. Ah! shall we not be content to a separation which ex-

tends though but the "little while," that Christ may be with the Father?

This implies Christ's reinstatement in glory. He resumed the honor He had with the Father before He voluntarily resigned it in the interests of our redemption. We here recall His repeated statements respecting His oneness with the Father. And now, when He says, "My Father is greater than I," He does not intend any essential inferiority on His own part, but speaks as the Son of Man. The reference is to condition, not to nature. The Athanasian Creed, of the fourth century, contains this concise and scriptural clause relating to the person of our Lord; "equal as touching His Godhead; inferior as touching His manhood." The Nicene Creed repeats it, as, in substance, have all the doctrinal formulas of the Christian Church for over eighteen centuries. If we keep in mind the union of the divine and human natures of Christ, or what is termed by theologians, the hypostatical union; we shall have no difficulty in harmonizing this statement with those which affirm the Godhead of Christ, in support of which the gospel of John was written; a view abundantly confirmed by the titles given to Christ, the perfections ascribed to Him, the works He performed, and the worship He received. The proper, personal divinity, or Godhead of our Saviour is a fundamental truth of the Christian system, which carries with it every doctrine essential to salvation.

As the equal in power and glory of the Father, Christ returned to His place in heaven.

How great must have been the admiration of angels, and the joy of saints, when Christ resumed His seat on the throne, crowned with glory! Now His Godhead shines forth in all its original splendor. As the sun may be eclipsed by some inferior world, so Christ's glory had been obscured by His humanity. But the now spiritualized body does not intercept the radiance of the divinity it enshrines. When He walked the country road on the day of His resurrection, with two of His disciples, He intimated that His suffering was to be succeeded by glory. But they had no conception of what awaited Him; nor had the five hundred believers after He had gone; nor have we, with the increasing light of the ages. Under the tuition of the Holy Spirit, who, through the Scriptures, is always unfolding the excellency of Christ, we ought to know more concerning the exalted Redeemer than those who witnessed His ascension. But His attributes of majesty far transcend our comprehension. We have come to the margin only. Yet we know enough to be thankful that Christ has returned to the Father, escaping the conditions of sorrow and shame which surrounded Him here, and entering into His glory. No doubt that to the disciples who witnessed His departure, —the opening heavens preparing a highway for His home-going,—some revelation of His glory

was made, accounting for the statement that they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They loved their Lord, and, at last, rejoiced in His return to the Father.

2. The glorification of Christ's human nature was connected with His ascension. It was not His divine nature only that ascended. He did not, somewhere along the line of His return, drop off His human form, as the ascending Tishbite dropped his mantle, nor did He remand it to non-existence. When He assumed our nature it was to retain it forever. It was the divine-human Christ who went up from Olivet with a shout, and the sound of a trumpet. And now, the humanity He had wrapped about His divinity is glorified.

The resurrection body of our Lord was greatly changed even before His departure. Limitations which had previously existed were removed. New properties took the places of the old. The laws of nature yielded to the authority of His will. Solid substances were no barrier to His movements. He was visible and invisible at pleasure. He talked with His disciples, they recognized Him, touched His person, listened to His familiar voice. Then, when it pleased Him, He suddenly vanished from their sight. But the glorification of His resurrection body took place on His return to the Father. What was involved therein is not revealed. But it was such a change as fitted it for its new conditions. The human nature was not deified, but it was exalted in

glory far above all principalities and powers; and although the resurrection bodies of the saints shall be fashioned like unto His body, still the glory of His shall far excel. As in our visible heavens, one star differs from another star in glory, so doubtless shall the future bodies of the redeemed; but Christ, in respect to His human nature, shall ever be the bright and morning star, in degree transcending in glory all the subjects of His grace, and yet a type of all believers, however bent with sorrow here, or deformed by disease, or mutilated by violence; their persons ultimately clothed in beauty, and invested with power, shining with a splendor above that of the sun. No wonder that Jesus, anticipating the glorification of His humanity, said to His disciples, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father."

3. There is also to be added, the Mediatorial glory of Christ. Then all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth. He was announced as King in Zion. In His hand was placed the sceptre of universal dominion. His official dignity set Him above all heavens. There, too, as our Priest, He lives to present His sacrifice in our behalf. "Wherefore," says Paul, "He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." The ultimate perfection and coronation of all His people is assured; for He shall accomplish all His holy will, fulfill every promise, and realize every hope which cheers our night-passage home.

It is pleasant reflection, beloved, that although Christ, as the God-man, has returned to the Father, there to abide forever, yet He remains the same sympathizing, helpful Saviour, through all the years of His bodily separation from us. Never for a moment has He forgotten Calvary, or even the humblest for whom He died. He is, moreover, spiritually present every hour. He will minister to us, as to all the generations of the faithful past, meeting all our need, supporting us by His strength, guiding us by His counsel, comforting us by expressions of His love, and assurances of an abundant entrance into His kingdom, when a few more years shall have hastened by.

It should also be borne in mind that Christ's return to the Father was necessary for us. Without it the Comforter, in the larger manifestations of Himself, could not have come; the spiritual life of believers would have been languid; the advance of the church would have been slow; and the salvation of the world, if ever accomplished, would have been set far down in the depths of the ages. Hence Jesus said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." Thus, in the economy of redemption, it had been ordered.

Moreover, we needed an intercessor in heaven; an advocate with the Father; a representative of the church; an almighty, ever-prevalent, never-forgetful friend; to make ready for our coming and introduction into everlasting joy.

In view of all this we do not wonder at the words of Jesus; "If ye loved Me, ye would have rejoiced." The statement is comparative. Jesus was assured of their love to Himself. Concerning this, not even the shadow of a doubt ever crossed His mind, even when they seemed most indifferent to Him. But if they had fully believed what, in His endeavor to comfort them and to reveal the glory of the nearing future, He had said to them; and if their love had been a stronger, more self-controlling principle; then they would have rejoiced in view of His return to the Father.

1. This discussion suggests several facts in Christian experience. We are slow of heart to believe. We recognize our kinship with the disciples. As they failed to draw from the words of Jesus, so full of sympathy, and love, and promise, the lessons they were designed to convey; words which should have turned their lamentations into praises, and their sorrow into joy; so we are slow to comprehend and believe the promises of the gospel, its revelation of glory, and its expressions of unfaltering love; and we go weeping along the way that leads us home, even into the shadow of the portal which admits us to His presence. We need to meditate more profoundly on the Word of God, that we may discover its meaning, and learn its power; and to offer the prayer of one in Christ's day, "Lord I believe, help Thou my unbelief."

2. We should cultivate a more disinterested

love. This is the source of the serenest joy. To be filled with love to Christ is to exclude selfishness, self-seeking, and forgetfulness of others' good. The sorrow of the disciples was induced by a sense of personal loss. They thought not of Christ's gain. The gates of heaven were open, the throne waited, the glory lingered for the Man of Sorrows, who was, and is, and ever shall be, the joy of heaven. A stronger love would have dried their tears, and filled them with joy in view of the good that awaited their Lord. Love is its own recompense. The Good Samaritan knew its reward; the Priest and Levite were strangers to it. Lazarus in his rags was happier than Dives in his purple. Love to Christ and His people mellows character; gives sweetness to the voice; imparts beauty to the plainest face; makes the world better. "With it," as some one has said, "the heart becomes a fair and fertile garden, with sunshine and warm hues, and exhaling sweet odors; without it, it is a bleak desert, covered with ashes." O for more love to Christ! On bended knees let us seek it. It is the grace which outshines all other graces and draws them after it. "Covet the best gifts."

3. We should not mourn for departed saints. What an incongruous sight; our beloved crowned with glory, and we bent with sorrow. Heaven ringing with songs, and we filling the night with sobs. Jesus said to the widow at Nain, "Weep not." He rebukes our inordinate grief. Let faith

do its office work, passing through and beyond these darkened skies, away to the glory to be hereafter revealed, and witness the entrance of believers into the joys of an endless life; no more to suffer, no more to die; the tendrils of their love still entwining us; and their hearts rejoicing in the prospect of welcoming us to their home and ours; and then, if we dry not our tears and praise God for their entrance into glory, perchance we shall hear a message, carrying with it a gentle rebuke; "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I have returned to the Father."

# ON TO GOLGOTHA

*Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.*—JOHN xiv. 30, 31.

*He goes to die a sacrifice, out of love to mankind, in obedience to the Divine will, and with unshaken courage. All our actions should be formed on this plan. They should have the love of God and man for their principle and motive; His glory for their end; and His will for their rule. He who lives and acts thus, shall live forever. Amen.*—ADAM CLARKE.

## XVII

## ON TO GOLGOTHA

THERE are some who think that the first part of our Lord's valedictory was spoken in Bethany, and that the Master, with His disciples, then went to Jerusalem "to keep the passover." After the Supper He resumed His address, introducing the illustration, drawn from the vine, of the spiritual union subsisting between Himself and His people. Others think that the portion of the farewell contained in the fourteenth chapter of John, was delivered in the upper room, at the close of the memorial feast; that Christ and the eleven there sang the Hallel, embraced in Psalms cxvi.–cxviii., containing intimations of the sufferings of the Messiah; and as the last strain, which was a recognition of divine love, had died away among the high arches, the little group descended the stairway, passed quietly down the narrow street and out of the city, stopping at intervals on the slope leading to the Kedron valley, while Jesus spoke the final words of His affectionate farewell, and breathed that wonderful intercessory prayer which, climbing up through the night, reached the Father's throne; and that they then entered the gate of sad Gethsemane. Still others hold the view that Christ, having risen from

the table, continued and completed His address in the upper chamber; a vine growing on the contiguous grounds, or some representation on door or chalice, suggesting, in a significant similitude, the spiritual relations subsisting between Christ and His people.

But the place of the utterance is of little importance as compared with the message itself—the most remarkable that ever fell from our Saviour's lips—a revelation of sympathy, solicitude and love, unparalleled in any merely human discourse, and which has survived all the centuries since it was spoken.

Christ was about to close His farewell address to His disciples. So, at least, it seemed. He saw the prince of this world approaching, ready for the last dread conflict. He must not tarry. Farewells have an end. The trumpet call sounding through the night, He gathers His robe about Him and says, "Arise, let us go hence."

1. Observe, first, the calm and determinate purpose of our Lord. Christ longed for the baptism of death. He did not shrink from it now that it was near. He knew all that awaited Him. No part of His agony was concealed, or was a matter of conjecture only. He had stood on the margin and His vision had swept the far-off shore. He had dropped the plummet of His omniscience into its depths, and had taken the measurement no human thought could ever compass.

Perhaps some martyrs would have shrunk from the burning, or the rack, if they had known all the torture it would bring. Christ had walked for years in the shadow of the cross, and had anticipated all the sorrow that preceded it. Partly because of this, there had been a tinge of sadness on His face, and a tone of sadness in His speech. He had felt, also, along all the way, the pressure of the world's guilt, wretchedness and woe; and knew that only the cross could lift it off. His hour has come. Even to-night shall be the betrayal, the mock-trial, the denial, the scourging; and to-morrow the death.

No one had ever known suffering so great, and ingratitude so immeasurable. The great Cæsar, wrapped in his blood-stained mantle, died at the base of Pompey's statue, of a broken heart. The cruelty of his friends killed him; not their swords. The far more sensitive nature of Jesus must endure a profounder grief. But, standing by the window of that upper chamber, looking out on that sorrowful way which leads to Calvary's summit, His agony culminating in the hidings of His Father's face, His purpose wavers not. "Arise, let us go hence."

It was as if He had said, "My disciples, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Your presence has been My comfort, as Mine has been your support. Gladly would I prolong this sad parting—this sweet communion. But it cannot be. My

love to you urges Me on. These hands must be pierced with nails before they can open the gate of heaven for you. This brow must wear the crown of thorns that the crown of glory may rest forever on yours. Arise, then, and let us go hence."

But see, a little while remains. The passover moon has not risen far above the brow of Olivet. And now, with the sorrowful group about Him, either in the upper chamber or on the way, He breathes out His soul in other words, full of precious meaning, of measureless love and yearning desire; then enters Gethsemane, darkened by the shade of the Olive trees. He is not even a moment late. Truly He was faithful. His purpose never for an instant faltered. We may shrink, and hesitate on the border of some human woe. Origen, Savonarola, Cranmer, recanted, yet recovered and joined the noble company of martyrs. But Christ's life, from the moment He became conscious of His mission, and caught a glimpse of Golgotha, was a continual, unwavering "going hence."

2. The end in view.

Christ would finish the work He came to do. For four thousand years His death had been predicted. To the Hebrew Church it was the great event of the ages to come. They were forever occupied with prophecies that centred in Christ; with the theophanies that pointed to Him; with the sacrifices that foreshadowed His blood-shedding. Now type, prophecy, and symbol are about to find

their full interpretation and fulfillment, in the death of the incarnate God.

The Prince of this world has come, girded for his deadly work. The Son of God must meet him in the final conflict, and forever settle the question as to where the propriety of the world shall rest—in Satan or in Christ. The Prince of darkness overtops all other foes. Inferior enemies are his servants. Hence Christ does not speak in these last hours of Judas, Caiaphas or Pilate; of the Romans who shall nail Him to the tree, or of the rabble who shall mock His dying agony. They were the instruments only. No! "The Prince of this world cometh."

Had we been there on that solemn night, and had our eyes been opened as were the eyes of Elisha's servant outside the Samaria gate, we would have seen the great Adversary marshalling His forces, and pressing on to conflict. A mighty army, their chariots roll along the fields of the sky. Their armor reflects the light of the Syrian stars and of the Passover moon. The world of darkness is deserted that its power might be centred on this crucial hour. A little while hence, and Jesus shall meet His enemy and ours, alone; His bosom calmly bared to the stroke. Soon the waves of strife shall flow all along the paths of the Garden, and sweep the brow of Calvary. What shall the end be? Shall Christ, the second Adam, be conquered as was the first? Shall the hope of this weary, wait-

ing world, which had shone at first as a single star, then as the clustering Pleiades, then as a growing galaxy in the sky, fade away into impenetrable night; or shall the Galilean triumph? Shall Satan and his hosts be driven back, and heaven resound with hallelujahs as the Son of Man in dying conquers? We shall see. "Arise, let us go hence."

But why should Christ suffer? Why the agony in the garden, on the cross? Has He sinned? No! Judas says, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." Is He guilty of any offence, that He should die as malefactors die? No, Pilate, weak and vacillating, dares to say, "I find no fault in Him." Has Satan any charge to bring against Him, and does He claim to be the executioner of divine wrath? No! Shall the powers of darkness prevail, truth be banished, and immortality become a curse; or shall Satan be vanquished by this lonely Nazarene who, as the prophet foretold, has entered the enemy's country, and invaded the capital city of His nether world?

What then? Has He been indiscreet in speech? Has He, without design, preached great doctrinal error, or in an honest endeavor to be faithful, has He unnecessarily aroused the anger of the Jews? Is He to be a martyr to His own grave mistakes? Not so. He died by the predetermined counsel and foreknowledge of God. He died for our sins, not His own. It was written long before He came, "All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord

hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." Christ, the sinless one, was representatively guilty. He is the sacrifice to which all ages pointed.

Notice the Motive which controlled our Lord. "That the world may know I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

1. Love to the Father led Christ to the cross. Speaking out of the overshadowing cloud, God had said of Jesus, by the shore of Jordan, "This is My beloved Son." The love was mutual; God and Christ were one. Jesus knew the love of God to men. No one else, save the Holy Ghost, had ever measured it. In His infinite love to His wayward children, the Father longed to save them without doing violence to that law which was holy, just and good. Love delights to gratify love. Hence Christ said, as He walked calmly toward Calvary, "Because I love the Father, I go to My dying." He knew redemption secured by blood-shedding, without which there could be no remission of sins, would glorify God, would declare His immeasureable love; and reveal the mercy that embraced truth, and the righteousness which kissed peace, meeting on the steeps of Golgotha. Moved by love to the Father, the hand nailed to the cross opened the way of return to Him.

2. Obedience. "As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." Obedience is the expression of love. It is a light even a joyous bur-

den, if love carry it. It was the will of God that Christ should die. He would open the way, for us sinners, into the holy place by the blood of Jesus. He had so declared even before the foundations of the world were laid, and Jesus had responded, "Lo I am come to do Thy will, O God." Now, obedient to the Father, He goes forth to His crucifixion.

By a word He might have destroyed His enemies. He had but to wave His hand, and Roman soldiers, hypocritical priests, and mocking rabble would have disappeared as a morning mist. But this must not be. His pledge to the Father forbade it. The world's salvation, lying close to His heart, forbade it. As a sheep before her shearers is dumb so He opened not His mouth. He allowed men whose being He supported, to lead Him as a lamb to the slaughter. He was quiet, unresisting, "As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do."

This subject is suggestive. 1. It may serve to correct misconceptions of God. We are apt to associate justice with the Father, and love with the Son; to think God is severe, stern, and slow to forgive, and that Christ, loving us, and desiring to propitiate the Father, sprinkled over the burning throne His own blood, and so put out its consuming flame. A great mistake! God knew the integrity of His government must be maintained, and His law honored, or moral chaos would sweep the

universe, and extinguish its joy forever. The problem to be solved was, how may the divine government be maintained and sinners saved? Love discovered the means; and, to-day, the church on earth and the church in heaven—one church, divided for a little by the narrow stream of death—is filled with wonder and dumb with surprise, as it contemplates "God's unspeakable gift."

Jesus knew the Father. He had been in the inner sanctuary of His incomprehensible being; and, coming out of it, down to our wretchedness and ruin, He said, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

2. We cannot fail to be impressed by the unchangeableness of Christ's love. What if, when in the significant act of breaking the bread and pouring out the wine at the supper, He had said,—"I came to My own and My own received Me not. I would have gathered Jerusalem's children under My sheltering love, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but they would not. I have encountered hatred, opposition, scorn. Even now, although it is nigh the midnight hour, men are plotting for My life, and uttering curses that make the darkness shudder. I will go home to My Father and tell Him that the world to which He gave Me has cast Me off, and that there is nothing

left for Me but to return to Him, and lay My rejected commission down at His feet." Ah, no! His love was stronger than death. Yonder are the garden, Pilate's Hall, the cross with its penetrant nails and piercing thorns, and unfathomable spiritual woes. Yes, but instead of turning back the moment Calvary stands forth to His view in the light of the cold, passionless moon, loving His own as the Father has loved Him, He says, "Arise, let us go hence."

3. Again, we are reminded that although Christ, deserted by His friends, and forsaken of God, died alone; we shall not go hence unattended. When the shadows of death gather about us, and our eyes are dimmed that we cannot see afar off; we shall hear a voice, grown familiar, quiet and tender, saying, "Arise, let us go hence." Then we shall feel the clasp of Christ's hand, and we shall go through death together. Blessed be God for the assurance of this. Fearing not the passage, we shall lift our heads with joy, and say, with the exiled apostle, "Come, Lord Jesus." Amen.

# OUR GOING HENCE

*Arise, let us go hence.*—JOHN xiv. 31.

*My life is a frail life, a corruptible life, a life which, the more it increaseth the more it decreaseth, the farther it goeth the nearer it cometh to death; a deceitful shadow, full of the snares of death. . . . Oh, joy above joy, exceeding all joy, without which there is no joy, when shall I enter into thee, that I may see my Lord that dwelleth in thee.*—AUGUSTINE.

## XVIII

## OUR GOING HENCE

When Christ said to His disciples, "Arise, let us go hence," He uttered suggestive words which come to us in the varied experiences of life; and, rightly heard, stimulate our endeavor to attain the greater good He has promised to His own. He was about to lead His disciples through great trials, and out of them; about to recompense all their pain with an incomparably greater good; to interpret something of the mystery that had gathered about His unique person, His sorrowful life, and His agonizing death. He seems eager to put behind them whatsoever taxed their credence, or induced disquietude and fear. He would conduct them up to better things, and on to greater works. Hence He says, "Arise, let us go hence."

In like manner He addresses us in these last times. As it was true of Israel in the wilderness, that there was a land of beauty, their own inheritance, just on the other side of the dark Moab Mountains; so there is a life of fellowship with Jesus, and of consummated hope, beyond the necessary trials of the present; the conflict and the pain. Here we have no continuing city, but seek

one to come. Let us neither loiter, nor despair. "Arise, let us go hence."

1. The afflictions of life should lead our thoughts on to the everlasting rest. There is much beauty in the world, much that is pleasant in human relationships, much varied joy in life as the years hasten by; and, go where we may, sources of pure delight are opened to meet us at our coming. But there is no argument against suffering; no wall of protection so high as to shut it out. As the day, by an inevitable law of nature, declines, and the sun goes to its setting, so the lights of life go out in darkness, and the song of the heart is often stilled. True, if the night cometh, so also the morning. But these vicissitudes of life remind us that we have not yet come to our rest.

A state of discipline is not the crown of life. The mingling of joy and sorrow, of good and evil, is not the ultimate will of God for us. There is something better beyond. There is a land over which storms never gather, on which shadows never fall, into which sorrows never enter. There is a life complete, serene, eternal; in which every want is supplied, and every longing satisfied. The suffering here is not worthy to be compared to the glory there, and the thought of this should quicken our steps homeward.

The patriarch who said of his days that they had been few and evil, waited for the salvation of God. Paul, who suffered greatly, had a desire to depart

and be with Christ, which he esteemed far better. John, in his lonely exile, caught glimpses of the glory to be revealed, and longed to go where his heart and treasures were. An afflicted state is much like a troubled sea which gives back broken images of the heaven above it, but distinct enough to suggest the undisturbed serenity of the life to come, and to awaken yearnings after it; an entreaty, low and affectionate, ever lingering on the air, "Child of sorrow, let us go hence."

2. The very enjoyments of life urge us forward. They suggest the larger and satisfying pleasures of the world on high. As Isaac Watts contemplated the beauties of nature with a keen appreciation of all the loveliness about him, he experienced less a desire to remain than to go; for he was persuaded that, since this world, marred by sin, was so comely, heaven must be incomparably fair. So it is with everything that contributes to the dignity and pleasure of life; whatever has its source in knowledge, in conscious elevation of thought, and in the products of genius, on canvas, in marble, or in some oratorio that stirs and lifts our souls—all these are hints of that which is immeasurably superior. And since all these receive their inspiration from an infinite mind, and borrow their light from the world above, they kindle in us an inexpressible longing to pass within the veil, to see what eye has not seen, to hear what ear has not heard, and to enjoy what the heart of man cannot comprehend.

We are like the traveller who has touched the margin of great natural beauty, and glancing down long perspectives of splendor, or listening to the voices of music that come from distant scenes, is impatient to pass from the quieter beauty to that which excels, so the spiritual pleasures of the life which now is, awaken a desire for that existence which is higher and more enduring, always making some new contribution to an ecstatic joy.

3. Then, too, the unsatisfying nature of present enjoyments suggests the better portion of the future. There is nothing here that exactly fits and fills the soul. This is true in the experience of all classes, the evil and the good. Conquest failed to satisfy the greatest conquerors the world has known. "Is this all?" was the bitter exclamation of the great Cæsar when the world lay in submission at his feet. The most unhappy lives are those that have been crowned with greatest achievements. The Czar of all the Russias enjoys less than his drosky driver, and Tolstoi than his amanuensis.

Even the experiences of piety are similar. The good which it attains is unsatisfying. Victory over temptation and sin brings joy that is succeeded by a longing to go where tempters and sin are forever unknown. The Archbishop of Canterbury was alike oppressed by a sense of responsibility and the emptiness of the honor conferred upon him. When we, as Christians, have found some desired retreat from vexing care, or wearing toil, or de-

pressing disease, or financial troubles that have made long furrows in our souls, we do not realize the rest we had expected. There is still a vacancy in the heart, or some bitterness in the life, and a reproving voice rouses us from our sad musing, saying, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

It cannot be otherwise. God has made us for Himself; and we cannot be at rest until we go to Him. As Young, in his "Night Thoughts," has expressed it, "We have been winged by heaven to fly at infinite and reach it there where seraphs gather immortality, on life's fair tree fast by the throne of God." Then, evidently, we cannot be satisfied with anything less than that for which we were made. The soul is always rising to greater heights, enlarging its capacity to receive, embracing a wider view of its possibilities, and experiencing a stronger impulse toward that which is infinite and eternal; and, even in the Upper Chamber of communion which Christ, our hands in His, and our trustful heads on His breast, we hear His word persuasively saying, "Arise, let us go hence."

4. The undue attachments of this life bid us go onward.

We may love too well our earthly homes and the beauty which adorns them. The consciousness of this, when it comes over us, carries a solemn admonition with it; and bids our thoughts travel into the invisible world beyond.

In beautiful England there are many who, even with existing facilities of travel, have never seen the towers of London, or lingered among the beautiful scenes of Rydal Water. Of one of the Roman Emperors, who reigned for three and twenty years, it is recorded that the longest journey he ever made was from his palace in Rome to the quiet and rest of his Lanurian villa. Let us not be so occupied with earthly things as to forget the heavenly. Thankful for the temporal blessings God has bestowed, these should stimulate our souls to make long journeys into the country where our inheritance lies, and to carry its spirit in our hearts while on the way to its possession. Hear you not the voice of your soul's Beloved, saying, "Long enough have you tarried in this mountain, turn you and take your journey."

The good we now enjoy is only a foretaste of the fullness of blessing in reserve, and is not designed to detain us here, but to urge us on. It is an expression of Christ's love which is prophetic of what is infinitely better, and should incite us to nobler endeavor; as the message from home, which a courier has been commissioned to bring to the approaching traveller, quickens the steps of the latter across the dividing hills. It is a sad sight to see Christians grow worldly; occupied with perishable good; with an unsatisfying portion; neglecting communion with Christ; intermitting loving service for Him; and growing remiss in that

soul-culture which increases usefulness here, and adds to the recompense hereafter. To such there comes a message which carries with it a gentle rebuke they should heed, "Arise, let us go hence."

5. The mystery of life is another call to go onward. There are secrets in nature, in providence, in grace. The most profound are those which exist in the spiritual world. It is because of our ignorance that we cannot solve life's enigmas, and because of the imperfection of our faith that we cannot see afar off. We have learned much concerning matter and mind, and the laws which govern both, that our fathers never knew; but we have reached only the borders of a measureless realm. We, ourselves, are fearfully and wonderfully made. We talk about organic life, but cannot define it; about the mind, but cannot interpret its action; about the soul, but cannot determine its properties, or mode of existence. We cannot tell how the eye sees, or the ear hears, or the will controls the movements of the body; or just what are the relations which the soul sustains to the human frame in which it dwells.

So, also, mystery enfolds the providences of God as related to ourselves and others. The Psalmist said that God's path was in great waters and His footsteps were not known. What was true in that day is true in ours. But some of God's dealings with us, at first inscrutable, are interpreted even here. Jacob understood, when Joseph's wagons

had carried him down to Egypt, why God had led him by paths dark as night, and painful as they were hidden. Bunyan's allegory interpreted even to him the Bedford prison; and Latimer's joyful communings with God, his confinement in the old London tower. In some distressing experiences of life we say, "All things are against us," and learn, by and by, that all things were for us.

But there are many questions that must remain unsolved. The veil will not be lifted while life lasts. The providence of God will still be a river whose source we cannot find, and its end out of our sight. There is much concerning our relations to God, to one another, to what is transpiring in the world around us; much concerning God Himself, the existence of sin, the person of Christ, the agony of the cross, and the work of the Holy Spirit within us, which is unsolvable mystery. We crave knowledge. We were made for it. We cannot find it here. There are great heights of vision, immeasurable realms of truth, wondrous unfoldings of mystery, awaiting us above; and we shall not be at rest until Christ's promise has been fulfilled, "Thou shalt know hereafter."

To know more of God will be indescribable joy. To understand why Paradise was lost; why regained; and how all prophecy had a meaning, and ancient symbols a significance, and altar-fires tongues of prophetic flame, and Hebrew rites a spiritual import exceeding all our conceptions; to

know how inspiration guided the hands that wrote the Scriptures; how the Godhead was linked with our humanity; and how the Holy Spirit entered and moved and lifted our being; to have made plain to us all the unintelligible predictions respecting the future of the church on earth and its glory in heaven; to learn what are the employments, companionships and communings of the world on high; then, moreover, to trace in minutest details all the windings of the earthly life, often in dark recesses, in unexpected solitudes, and in desert places, discovering abounding goodness in it all—this will enlarge our being, and fill it with wonder, love and praise. Therefore we hear, with thankfulness, the voice, and respond to it, which tells of an uplifted veil—"Arise, let us go hence."

6. The Christian's hope is an appeal from the world to come. This is described as an anchor cast within the veil. Paul turned his face toward the future, and, discerning intimations of his early departure, said, "I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." The humblest Christian may feel the influence of the same blessed hope. There may come to us, through the weakness of our faith, or through the blinding influence of some permitted sin, a season of despondency and fear; but Jesus will not suffer our hope to be utterly destroyed, nor

our now penitent souls to come short of the promised rest.

There is an incident in history we perhaps often recall. We seem to hear coming to us, across four hundred years, a voice clear and joyous, sounding out by night, from the deck of the Pinta, "Land! land, señor. Land ahead!" and the neighboring ship answers with the Gloria in Excelsis. The sailor of Genoa believes he is about to cast anchor in the harbor of his anxious search, and his joy is almost greater than he can bear. Every eye turns toward the West. The dim outlines of a continent, with mountain and plain, promontory and bay, strange beauty spreading over all, seems to lie in peacefulness on the low horizon, awaiting the arrival of the travellers. At length the day dawns and the last lingering shadows pass away; when lo! it is discovered that it is only a night cloud they have seen, and it quickly disappears. So we have known a joyful hope about to turn to despair. Heaven is pronounced a mirage only; and although its existence, for some, is not questioned, for them it is seemingly as a dream when one awaketh. But Jesus pities them, and comes to their relief. It is only a little moment, and the day brightens. They see the coast-line of the better country, breathe the fragrance of its fields, hear low voices of its joy; and, at last, the waters calm, and the King's country near, the faithful vessel hastes to touch the shore, and a voice, familiar and assuring, welcomes them home.

Our thoughts of late have been much occupied with the personal Christ, feeling the impulse of His life, and rejoicing in His ineffable love. Our religion is not a philosophy only; a cold abstraction; a pulseless creed. Its great power lies in the personality around which all truth gathers, from which our spiritual life is derived, to which our hearts cling. Heaven owes its chief glory and joy to the presence of the great King, to whose person the redeemed are attached by ties that shall never be broken, in a relationship affectionate as it is enduring.

Our nature demands some object of supreme love. It was Rousseau who said, "Were I in a desert, I would find out in it wherewith to call forth my affections. If I could do no better, I would fasten them upon some sweet myrtle, or some melancholy cypress. I would love it for its shade, and greet it kindly for its protection. I would write my name upon it, and pronounce it the sweetest tree in all the desert. If its leaves withered, I would teach myself to mourn; and if it rejoiced, I would rejoice with it."

In this beautiful passage a great truth finds utterance. But sentient being can be satisfied only with sentient love. A living person, possessed of moral excellence; responsive to our most ardent affection; fitted for companionship and helpful ministry; above ourselves, yet in fullest sympathy with us; ever faithful, loving and true;—such a

person supplies the deepest craving of the natural heart.

But there is a love that is higher, purer, and more overmastering than any merely human affection. Its object is Jesus, the sum of all excellence, the source of all blessing, fairer than the children of men. Our hearts answer His. He first loved us, and now our being is lost in His. We shall never cease to praise Him for the grace which stooped and won our hearts—in years recent or long past, when

> "Love took up the harp of life and smote on all the chords with might,
> Smote the cord of self, which trembling, passed in music out of sight."

His is love which passes knowledge. His tender farewell moves all the springs of our being, and the hope of seeing Him, face to face, brightens our passage across this low and often shadowed ground.

With these heart-thoughts we close our meditations on the last words of Jesus. We have only touched the outer edge of these great truths, and have seen only the skirts of Christ's glory. We shall know Him better, and love Him more, when we shall have gone where He is. We have long anticipated that happy hour. Ever since we were born again, our lives have been a continual going hence. We have declared ourselves pilgrims, and

have sought a city to come. All our privileges along the way; all our victories over tempters and sin; every fresh baptism of grace which made glad our souls; every sorrow, disappointment, loss, and each grave we have opened for our dead, have marked a further stage in our advance; and, not caring to repeat the experiences of the departed years, we are glad that our journeying days are nearly ended. For many of us this is true.

And now, dear reader, the evening twilight fading, the Beloved's call breaking in upon the adoring silence of our souls, and the night coming on; having sat together for a season at Jesus' feet; my interest in you increasing as the hours of our communion have gone by; we reluctantly part, but only for a little while. We shall meet in the morning, and renew our fellowship where the day shall never darken and communion with Jesus, and with each other shall never end. Until the day dawn and the shadows flee away—Farewell!

THE END

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